



Jordan Times

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Iran heading for sanctions clash

TEHRAN (R) — Iran is set to award two multi-million dollar oilfield contracts that could provoke American sanctions if foreign firms win the deals to carry out development work at the offshore fields. State-owned National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) will award contracts to develop its Soroush and Balal offshore oilfields by the end of March, a NIOC manager said on Saturday. "Final proposals of the interested companies have been received by NIOC and the winners will be announced by the end of March," Seyed Jalilian, NIOC's director of offshore division told Reuters in an interview in Tehran. European, Asian and Iranian companies were being considered for the work at the two fields, Mr. Jalilian added. U.S. President Bill Clinton signed the Iran-Libya sanctions bill last year, citing the two states as leading sponsors of international terrorism, a charge denied by Tehran. The law allows Mr. Clinton to choose from a broad range of trade and financial penalties against any firm that invests \$40 million or more a year in Iranian and Libyan oil industries.

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King hosts iftar

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday hosted an iftar for notables from the Ma'an, Tafleeh, Aqaba and Madaba governorates at the Al Hussein Youth City. The banquet was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Royal family members, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and the King's advisers.

Russian envoy holds talks in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Russian presidential envoy Boris Kousykh held talks here Saturday with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa on the Middle East peace process and bilateral relations. Mr. Kousykh, who arrived late Friday in Cairo, told reporters he would be holding talks Sunday with President Hosni Mubarak "focusing mainly on bilateral relations between the two countries." Russia "understands perfectly well the policies of Mr. Mubarak in the Middle East and in the world and these policies have the support of President Boris Yeltsin," Mr. Kousykh said.

Flash floods kill 7 in S. Arabia

JEDDAH (AP) — floods caused by heavy rains have killed seven people in the country's western region, newspapers reported Saturday. Four workers drowned in flash floods, one man died when he fell into a flooded ditch and a couple were killed when flood waters overturned their vehicle, the papers reported. Helicopters were brought in to airlift people marooned by the floods, including one pregnant woman about to give birth, the papers said. Rains have caused extensive damage in the usually dry western region, uprooting electrical cables and flooding homes. Saudi authorities have warned people to stay away from valleys liable to overflow because of the rain, the papers reported. Four people died last November when rainstorms lashed the mostly desert kingdom. Saudi Arabia has an annual rainfall of about 15 centimetres.

Kurds vow support for Cyprus

ATHENS (AFP) — Kurdish representatives in Athens said Saturday they would support Greek Cypriots against their "common enemy," Turkey, in the wake of tensions between Ankara and Nicosia over a planned missile deployment. The National Liberation Front of Kurdistan (ERNK) said in a statement that "in case of war in the Aegean or in Cyprus" Kurdish militants "will fight alongside the Greeks and the Greek Cypriots against the common enemy." The ERNK is the political wing of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which is fighting Ankara for a separate state in southern Turkey. The Kurdish separatist struggle is "also a war of historic vengeance for the Greek people, in Cyprus and in Greece," the statement said. The Greek-Cypriot government of Cyprus announced a deal early this month to purchase S-300 Russian missiles, which have a range of 150 kilometres and could reach targets in southern Turkey. Turkey responded by warning it would be willing to attack the southern part of the island if the missiles were deployed.

Hebron celebrates freedom ahead of Arafat visit, PNA meeting in divided town

Palestinian president set eyes on Arab East Jerusalem

HEBRON (Agencies) — Palestinians here on Saturday celebrated their new-found independence after 30 years of Israeli occupation, but Israel dampened their joy by closing shops in its part of the divided West Bank city. Several thousand Palestinians marched in front of Hebron's municipal building, which was draped with green, black, white and red Palestinian flags to mark the handover of 80 per cent of the flashpoint city to Palestinian rule on Friday. Scout bands marched down the streets, chanting, holding flags and pictures of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who was expected to visit Hebron in the next few days. "These two days are better than all the past 30 years of occupation put together," said Nuhail Abdel Aziz, a 45-year-old shop owner.

But Palestinians living in the Israeli-controlled zone said they feared the redeployment would now mean they would forever live in a divided city. "This is worse for us. Now instead of one thousand Israeli soldiers spread through out Hebron, we now have all of them concentrated right on top of us," said Omar, 28, who works in a metal shop in the old part of the city. "We want Palestinian control of the whole city and not just our part for us and a part for them," he added, not giving his full name.

Meanwhile, in the old city market next near the enclave where 450 Jewish settlers live in Hebron guarded by soldiers, the army maintained the closure of shops imposed after scuffles with Palestinians the day before. On the edges of the Israeli-controlled areas, long lines of Palestinian cars were backed up at new Israeli check-points set up on Friday.

Israel's 'objective' is restricted Palestinian self-rule — Netanyahu

PARIS (AFP) — In all its dealings with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Israel is seeking to limit Palestinian autonomy in areas which could threaten Israeli security, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says in an interview published Saturday.

The Israeli leader told the French newspaper Le Figaro that the "objective" of the Israeli government is to "maintain a Palestinian autonomy without certain prerogatives which could endanger our country." The paper did not say when the interview had been conducted. On Friday, the PNA, led by Yasser Arafat, took control of the key West Bank town of Hebron after a historic deal with Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing government.

According to Le Figaro, Mr. Netanyahu said Israel's policy "is safeguarding the land of our forefathers." "This was 'precisely what we did in the Hebron accord. We are staying in Hebron and we are deploying in the town, not outside," he said. "It's a good agreement for both sides," he added. "We want the Palestinians to respect all the commitments they made, including the amendment of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) Charter which demands the destruction of the Jewish state: the dismantling of terrorist organisations and

Palestinian police took up their duties directing vehicles on the streets in their part of the city, notorious for its traffic jams. Shortly after the Palestinian flag was raised in Hebron, Mr. Arafat proposed that Jerusalem could be the capital of two states, Israel and Palestine. The future of Jerusalem has not been tackled yet in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

"Why not have the same capital — as Rome?" Mr. Arafat said. "Rome is the capital of two states, the Vatican and Italy. So we can have the same capital of Israel and Palestine." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed that Jerusalem would remain Israel's capital "for eternity."

In an interview with the French daily Le Figaro published on Saturday, Mr. Netanyahu said: "There will never be a redeployment in Jerusalem." Arab East Jerusalem is the last Palestinian city occupied by Israel now that its troops have left most of Hebron.

Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas said he expected Mr. Netanyahu and his party would ultimately agree to a Palestinian state. "We are confident that at the end of those talks with the Likud we will end up with an independent Palestinian state with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital," Mr. Abbas said.

In an apparent softening of his hardline position on Palestinian statehood, Mr. Netanyahu told Le Figaro: "We can consider it... But we must first define the word 'state'. We need a new model which would grant autonomy in some fields and not in others."

Mr. Arafat was in the autonomous West Bank town of Ramallah on Saturday preparing for his first visit to

Hebron since self-rule, said his adviser, Nabil Abu Rdaina, adding that it could be Sunday or Monday.

The Palestinian cabinet, which usually meets on Friday, was preparing to hold its next meeting in Hebron. The meeting could be moved up to accommodate the visit by Mr. Arafat, who is to travel to Rome on Tuesday for a conference.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which took control of 80 per cent of Hebron on Friday after months of tortuous negotiations with Israel, was to hold a meeting in the city on Saturday to celebrate the arrival of self-rule, officials said.

The cabinet has already announced "an economic and social reconstruction plan for Hebron" to repair damage in the city, which has been a flashpoint of violence between Jews and Arabs.

About 400 armed Palestinian police deployed in Hebron Friday without fanfare or ceremony, making the city the last major populated area on the West Bank to obtain self-rule but the only one which is divided.

Under the accord reached on Wednesday, about 20 per cent of Hebron will remain under Israeli control, with soldiers posted there to protect the settlers. The troops will also guard the Ibrahim Mosque, holy to both Muslims and Jews.

In contrast to the euphoria which greeted the PNA arrival in Bethlehem, Ramallah and Nablus in late 1995, Hebronites' joy was muted by the fact that Israeli troops remain in a fifth of the city.

A clash broke out Friday near the mosque on the border between the Palestinian and Israeli-held zones, highlighting the potential for trouble in the divided city.

Hebron agreement changed nothing for Syria, official says

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — A Syrian official on Saturday reiterated Damascus' demand that Israel accept the principle of full withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights before talks resume between the two foes.

"The talks will not resume until the current Israeli government accepts the principle of full withdrawal from the Golan Heights to the pre-war June 4, 1967 border lines," one official told Reuters.

The statement came the day Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quoted in the French daily Le Figaro as saying Israel would never give up the Golan.

"We must keep the Golan for strategic, historical and economic reasons," he said. But Mr. Netanyahu, who last week signed the long-delayed deal turning over 80 per cent of Hebron in the occupied West Bank to Palestinian self-rule, said Israel and Syria were inching towards talks.

Israel's previous Labour-led government, which was defeated in elections in May by Mr. Netanyahu, broke off talks with Syria in March last year after a wave of suicide bombings in Israel in which 59 people were killed.

Meanwhile, Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam returned home from Cairo after talks with Egyptian leaders on how to boost Arab solidarity, officials said. Mr. Khaddam was accompanied by Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa.

Syrian officials said that Mr. Khaddam, who met President Hosni Mubarak during the visit, "discussed the Arab situation and means of reactivating joint Arab action."

Damascus' state-run radio, in an implicit reference to the Hebron deal, said that by signing the deal Mr. Netanyahu was trying to delude the world and show that he was a man of peace.

In Cairo, Mr. Khaddam and Mr. Sharaa also met Prime Minister Kamal Al Ganzuri and Foreign Minister Amr Moussa before wrapping up a two-day visit to Cairo.

On Friday Mr. Khaddam met Mr. Mubarak and handed him a message from Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on "the Arab situation and peace efforts" following the implementation of the Hebron accord, the Egyptian news agency MENA reported.

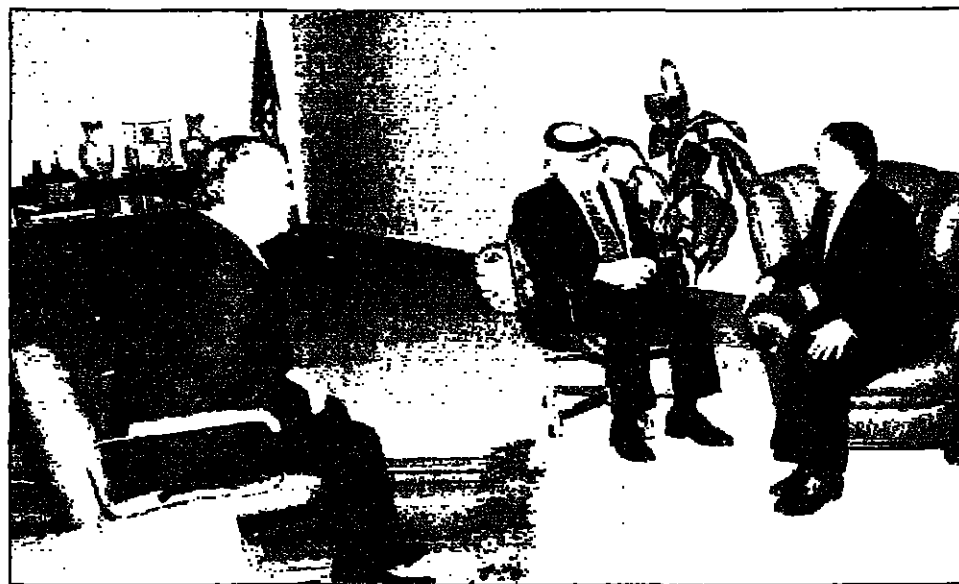
The Syrian and Egyptian officials did not release any statements at the end of the two-hour meeting, but MENA said they discussed "ways of bolstering common Arab action and developments in the peace process."

An Egyptian official said on Friday that Mr. Mubarak was to discuss the future of the peace process following the conclusion of the accord turning Hebron over to Palestinian rule.

The Syrian delegation went to Cairo after Mr. Mubarak held discussions on the telephone Thursday with Mr. Assad, who is recovering from prostate surgery.

Foreign residents could get 10-year licence

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued on Saturday ratifying a set of regulations for issuing temporary driving licences to non-Jordanians. According to these rules non-Jordanians could be issued driving licences valid up to 10 years. Also a Royal Decree was issued endorsing new regulations governing allowances to the staff of the Social Security Corporation. Another decree approved new regulations of issuing visiting visas for foreigners to the Kingdom. According to these regulations, visas will be issued for one or several visits from the Ministry of Interior and from Jordanian embassies abroad. Another decree was issued stipulating that those who rent cars should be at least 25 years old and the rented vehicles should be used only by the person who rents the car under a contract with the rental company.



His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday visit with the mayor of Amman, Mamdouh Abbadi, at his office at the Greater Amman Municipality (photo by Yousef 'Allan')

King expresses pride in capital; Prince Hassan urges council to contribute to employment

By Ramadan Rawashdeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein expressed pride in Amman and called for preserving the achievements of its municipal council to make it as a model to be emulated by others in the Middle East.

During a visit to the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) along with HRH Crown Prince Hassan and at a meeting with the mayor, GAM members and officials, King Hussein said Amman's cleanliness and well-organisation are now a source of admiration by every visitor.

"I might be one of the oldest inhabitants of the city of Amman amongst you, and I remember it when it was a mere village," the King told the gathering. "Then it was a kind of exaggeration to describe it as a city. Everyone of us

used to know the other people, their telephone numbers and the private and public transport cars," he noted.

"Now when I visit a place I have visited earlier, I find it difficult to reach my destination because the city has changed."

He said it was natural for such a change to bring with it many challenges and problems, but said he was confident in the city council's ability to overcome the challenges and problems.

"It is natural for this change to bring with it many challenges, requirements and problems, but with your resolve, sincerity and perseverance, as well as with dialogue, (interaction) and joint convictions, you will achieve all your aspirations and hopes which are, of course, our hopes and aspirations too."

"We hope that we will be able to establish and build

on our achievements to enable the coming generations to enjoy what we were deprived of," the King concluded.

After His Majesty concluded his visit to the municipality, Prince Hassan addressed the meeting by calling on the municipality to play a greater role in providing job opportunities to citizens.

Prince Hassan dwelt on the historical significance of the city, saying for example that the Amman citadel dates back to 4,000 years.

The Crown Prince said that in the world's great capitals there are internal urban areas, such as the case with the cities of London and Birmingham.

"Here I point out to an unknown role, and that is the role of developing urban conditions in the inner cities. And here I would like to point to the role of

(Continued on page 7)

Jordan, Iraq conclude oil, trade agreements

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq will raise the amount of oil supplied free to Jordan to \$300 million in 1997 from \$250 million last year, the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) said on Saturday.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein announced the decision during a meeting in Baghdad with Minister of Trade and Industry Ali Abul Ragheb and Minister of Energy Hashem Dabbas. "President Saddam Hussein has given the order for Iraq to provide for all Jordan's needs for crude oil and petroleum products at preferential prices," the agency said.

The sum of \$300 million "will be deducted from the value of petroleum products exported to Jordan," it added. Official sources said Jordan's bill for the import of oil from Iraq will therefore be raised by \$70 million a year.

(Continued on page 7)

The two ministers began talks with Iraqi officials on Thursday in a bid to renew agreements to import Iraqi oil and to renew a trade protocol between the two countries.

An oil agreement signed in 1990 calls on Iraq to supply Jordan with 3.2 million tonnes of crude and 1.2 million tonnes of petroleum products but Jordan wanted to increase its imports by

internal Sudanese problems. Ethiopia and Eritrea are not involved, as Sudan claims, in the attacks," Mr. Mubarak said at the opening of the International Cairo Book Fair, MENA said.

Mr. Mubarak's remarks came three days after he received Sudanese Vice-President Al Zubair Mohammed Saleh in Cairo.

Sudan tried to secure Egypt's support against the attacks on its eastern border, which it said were launched by Ethiopia and Eritrea.

But Egypt insisted on giving a low-profile to the meeting, barring television crews from filming the encounter and failed to issue any official statement after the encounter.

"The Egyptian government has underlined its support to the unity of Sudan," Mr.

(Continued on page 7)

Sudan says invaders pushed back; rebels report continued advance

KHARTOUM (Agencies) — The Sudanese government said on Saturday its army had pushed back attacks in the east of the country, where it says Ethiopian forces invaded last Sunday.

In Cairo the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which says it is responsible for the attacks, denied the government's account. "They are liars," opposition spokesman Farouq Abu Bissa told Reuters in Cairo.

"The armed forces have made a big advance at the battle fronts, especially in the Kurmuk and Qeissan areas," said the government newspaper Al Sudan Al Hadith.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak ruled out Ethiopian and Eritrean involvement in the fighting, the official Egyptian news agency MENA reported.

"What is happening now in Sudan are

(Continued on page 7)

Food, medicine to begin arriving soon for Iraqis

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iraq soon should begin receiving shipments of food and medicine under the U.N. oil-for-food plan now that the first revenues from oil exports have been deposited in a U.N.-controlled bank account, U.N. officials said Friday.

U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said the first revenues from oil sales were deposited this week in an escrow account at the Banque Nationale de Paris. As of Friday, \$113 million had been placed in the account, he said.

A U.N. diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the account was expected to grow to about \$219 million by the end of the month.

Funds from the account will be used to purchase food and medicine for the Iraqi people, who have been suffering the effects of more than six years of international sanctions.

Those sanctions were imposed in 1990 after President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. The Security Council refuses to lift the sanctions until it is convinced Iraq has complied with U.N. orders to dismantle its long range missiles and nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

But last year, the council agreed to relax the embargo to allow Iraq to sell up to \$2 billion worth of oil for an initial six months

to buy humanitarian goods.

The supplies will be distributed under U.N. supervision.

Mr. Eckhard did not say precisely when the first shipments of food and medicine would reach Iraq. But U.N. officials said the first major contract for food sales to Iraq had been approved.

It was for \$50 million worth of wheat purchased from Australia, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

On Thursday, U.N. officials told Security Council diplomats that the first of the 155 U.N. monitors who will oversee the humanitarian distribution were expected to arrive in Iraq in early February.

Mr. Eckhard said the U.N. financial crisis had delayed their arrival.

"Their recruitment, of course, has been hindered by the fact that there hasn't been money," Mr. Eckhard said. "Subject to availability of funds, we're planning to start deploying them either later this month or early February and complete deployment by the end of February."

About 30 U.N. monitors are already in Iraq to oversee the arrival of the goods at ports and airports. Their operation is separate from the planned 151 monitors who will supervise distribution throughout the country.



Iraqis chanting anti-Israeli slogans and praising Saddam Hussein demonstrate in the streets of Baghdad on Saturday to mark what the government designated as 'science day,' the day six years ago when Iraq launched Scud missiles against Israel in the Gulf war (AFP photo)

Iraqis celebrate launching of Scud attacks against Israel in Gulf war

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq held rallies on Saturday for "science day," its first commemoration of the 1991 Gulf war missile strikes on Israel.

"Science day... The day Al Hussein missiles hit selected targets in Tel Aviv and Haifa causing horror and fear among individuals of the Zionist enemy," the official Al Qadissiya said in a front page editorial.

More than 10,000 Iraqis took to the streets of Baghdad chanting slogans praising Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and carried banners denouncing U.S. and Zionist aggression against Iraq.

Ceremonies were also held in schools, universities and ministries during the day to celebrate the Iraqi technology used to adapt the Soviet-made Scuds to allow them to reach Israel.

Newspapers also gave pages of analysis and reports to the anniversary of the first firing of the Al Hussein Scud at Israel, with the official Al Jumhuriya saying the Al Hussein had "buried forever the theory of Israeli security."

Between January and February 1991, Iraq fired a total of 39 Scud missiles at Israel, killing two people and injuring more than 300.

The first celebration of the Scud attacks follows Thursday's celebration of the Gulf war during which President Saddam insisted Iraq had emerged victorious from the battle despite the fact his forces were driven out of Kuwait and a vast part of Iraq's military and industrial infrastructure was destroyed.

Iraq is still suffering from tough economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations after the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and which the U.N. insists will not be lifted until Iraq proves it no longer has long-range missiles.

The U.N. Special Commission on disarmament (UNSCOM) insists Baghdad is still hiding between six and 16 long-range missiles.

The Sunday's rallies were attended by senior ruling Baath party officials and thousands of school and university students.

Newspapers carried editorials and articles condemning Israel and praising the missile assault, saying it was in "revenge for the children of Palestine... And to punish this expansionist and aggressive entity (Israel) which is occupying Palestine."

"Iraqi missiles have awakened the spirit of resistance and defiance among Arabs and Muslims and reasserted their satisfaction that victory would be theirs," Al-Jumhuriya said.

Al-Jumhuriya said the attack has "broken up the theory of Israel's security."

Iraq and Israel are theoretically at war with each other. Iraqi troops took part in all Arab-Israeli wars. In 1982 Israeli warplanes raided and destroyed an Iraqi nuclear reactor close to Baghdad.

Jordanian faces extortion charge in Cyprus

NICOSIA (AFP) — A Jordanian working in Cyprus as a waiter was charged on Friday with trying to extort \$2 million from the French embassy here, police said.

Nasser Hussein Mohammad, 23, was charged at Nicosia criminal court with making threats to extort money and was remanded in custody until the trial on March 24.

Mohammad was arrested in a telephone booth in the southern port city of Limassol while on the line to the French embassy, police spokesman Gavcos Xenos told AFP. He said the man was "demanding \$2 million before Dec. 31 or else several French interests would be bombed."

Police told the court Mohammad admitted the offence, between 1994 and 1996, and that he claimed to be a member of an organisation called "Ansar Al-Hajj" (friends of the right).

According to Cypriot police, Ansar Al-Hajj, based in Lebanon, was involved in the Dec. 3 attack on a Paris underground train in which four people were killed and 41 wounded.

Investigators in Paris believe that militants from Algeria were behind the attack. Police said Mohammad had received training in "terrorist" activities in three countries which he refused to identify. In court, Mohammad asked Cyprus to grant him political asylum, and pleaded for the case to be sent to the United Nations.

Lebanon upholds immunity for detained Iraqi diplomats

BEIRUT (AP) — The Foreign Ministry has said that three Iraqi diplomats detained for the 1994 assassination of a dissident have diplomatic immunity and cannot be tried for murder.

The ruling could lead to the release of the diplomats, who have been held in police custody since shortly after the April 1994 assassination of Taleb Ali Al-Suhail, a key figure in a failed 1993 plot to overthrow Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Four Iraqi diplomats were arrested after the murder, but one died in 1995 of a brain hemorrhage.

The Foreign Ministry said the men were accredited diplomats who enjoy immunity from prosecution even though Lebanon no longer had diplomatic ties with Iraq, the independent Al-Nahar newspaper reported Saturday.

Prosecutor-General Adnan Adoum on Saturday confirmed the Foreign Ministry ruling, but added that the "Foreign Ministry's memorandum is not binding on judicial authorities. It is up to judicial authorities to decide what to do next."

An Nahar said Beirut prosecutor Abdullah Bitar was considering requests by the diplomats' lawyers to free the

men.

Two of the diplomats were arrested near the Iraqi embassy shortly after Al-Suhail was gunned down as he answered the door to his Beirut apartment. The two others took refuge in the Iraqi mission, sparking a standoff with authorities that led to Beirut severing diplomatic ties with Baghdad several days later.

Those diplomats were seized by security men at Beirut airport after a car chase across the city following the embassy's closure and the expulsion of its staff.

At the time of the arrests, Iraq insisted that the men had diplomatic immunity. Authorities held the diplomats and asked the Foreign Ministry to clarify their status.

The Foreign Ministry did not explain the more than 1 1/2 year delay in the decision.

But the decision could signal a thawing of relations between Iraq and both Lebanon and Syria. A Lebanese delegation visited Iraq last month for talks on a possible resumption of relations.

Arab diplomats in Cairo said, speaking on condition of anonymity, Iraq is a bitter foe of Syria, the dominant power in Lebanon.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

13:05 ... Min Al-Hadi Al-Mohammadi
13:30 ... The Famous Five
14:00 ... French Programmes
15:00 ... Feature Film — "Disaster of the Potomac (Flight 90)"
16:50 ... Call For Prayer And Ifar
17:30 ... You Bet Your Life
18:00 ... Magazine — Faut Pas
19:00 ... Le Journal
19:15 ... Magazine — Sports Et
19:30 ... News Headlines
19:35 ... Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
20:00 ... Oriental Rugs
20:30 ... Science Fiction — Baby-
lon 5
21:10 ... Tycoons (Documentary)
22:00 ... News in English
22:25 ... Islam in a Changing World
23:00 ... Hot Shots
23:50 ... Mini-Series — "Switched at Birth" (Pt. I)
01:15 ... Ramadan Talks

PRAYER TIMES

05:10 ... Fajr
06:31 ... (Sunrise) Doha
11:46 ... Dhuhur
14:37 ... 'Asr
17:01 ... Maghreb
18:22 ... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Switzerland, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 623666

Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church
Tel. 824328.

Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Stable weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.
Amman ... 02/12

Aqaba ... 09/21
Deserts ... 2/13
Jordan Valley ... 08/20

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 11, Aqaba 19 Humidity
readings: Amman 60 per cent,
Aqaba 45 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Shuqair ... 652693
Dr. Nidal Al-Asma' ... 751673
Dr. Isam Al-Asmar ... 890504
Dr. Osama Al-Husseini ... 847289
Firas pharmacy ... 661912
Ferdows pharmacy ... 778336
Al Asema pharmacy ... 657055
Nairoukh pharmacy ... 623672
Al Salam pharmacy ... 636730
Yacoub pharmacy ... 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy ... 637660
Najib pharmacy ... 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Baker ... 552206
Al Quds pharmacy ... (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Nabil Al-Safarini ... 901323
Khalifeh pharmacy ... 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre ... 637111
Civil Defence Department ... 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ... 630341
Civil Defence Emergency ... 199

Rescue Police ... 192 621111 637777
Fire Brigade ... 617101
Bank ... 775121
Highway Police ... 843402
Traffic Police ... 896390
Public Security Dept. ... 630321
Hotel Complaints ... 605800
Price Complaints ... 661176
Water & Sewage Complaints ... 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints ... 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) ... 121
Overseas Calls ... 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs ... 623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs ... 661101
Jordan Television ... 773111
Radio Jordan ... 774111
Water Authority ... 680100
J. Electricity Authority ... 815615
Electric Power Co. ... 656381
RJ Flight Information ... 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ... (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital ... (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital ... (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital ... (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel.

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre ... 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity ... 644281/6
Akileh Maternity ... 642441/2
Jabal Ammon Maternity ... 642362
Malhas, J. Amman ... 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani ... 607071
Shmeisani Hospital ... 669131

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ... (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital ... (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital ... (02)247100
AQABA:
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Ibn Al Nafes Hospital ... (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital ... (03)314111

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iranian seeks IAEA position

TEHRAN (R) — Iran has nominated the head of its atomic energy body as secretary-general for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iranian newspapers reported on Saturday. Iran had proposed Reza Amrollahi, head of the country's Atomic Energy Organisation (AEO) for the position which will become vacant in December 1997, the Tehran Times reported. Switzerland, Italy, Ukraine, Egypt and Zambia had also submitted names of candidates for the post, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported. Iran's first nuclear power station at the southern Iranian port of Bushehr will come on stream in three years with the help of Russian technicians, Mr. Amrollahi was quoted as saying earlier this month. The U.S. has objected to the \$800 million Iran-Russia deal on the grounds that Tehran might use the technology to develop nuclear arms. Iran denies it has any intention of building a nuclear bomb and says it wants alternative energy sources and that its sites are open to international inspection.

Beirut sentences 4 Islamists to death

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's highest court on Friday sentenced to death the head of a small radical group and three supporters for the 1995 killing of a rival Islamist cleric. The judicial council convicted Palestinian Ahmad Saadi of ordering the killing of Sheikh Nizar Al-Halabi, head of the pro-Syrian Al-Ahbash Sunni group. Three members of his Esbat Al-Ansar faction — two Lebanese and a Palestinian — were also sentenced to death for carrying out the assassination. Halabi was gunned down in his car in west Beirut in August 1995. The judicial council, whose rulings can not be appealed, had opened the trial of 20 group members — of whom Saadi and two others are at large — in May 1996 on charges of killing Halabi and belonging to a violent armed group. The court also sentenced two group members, a Palestinian and a Lebanese, to life in jail for their part in killing Halabi and two others received a 20-year and five-year jail terms respectively for previous failed attempts against his life. Twelve men accused of belonging to Esbat Al-Ansar (band of supporters) received shorter jail terms for carrying unlicensed weapons.

Turkish publisher in court for rights report

ISTANBUL (R) — A Turkish publisher and translator appeared in court on Friday accused of insulting the Turkish security forces by disseminating a report by the U.S.-based rights group Human Rights Watch. The pair, Ayse Nur Zarakolu and Ertugrul Kurku, face between two and six years in jail. They translated and published in Turkey the 1995 report "Weapons Transfers and Violations of the Laws of War in Turkey," which criticised Ankara's handling of a 12-year-old Kurdish rebel conflict. Defence lawyer Osman Ergin told the court the prosecution had taken particular offence at a sentence in the report that quotes an unnamed senior official at the U.S. embassy in Turkey as describing crack Turkish policemen as "brutal thugs." "I simply translated the book and I can see no crime in that," translator Kurku told the court. "These are two words in quotes are not even ideas or comments of the writer himself." The prosecution did not speak at the hearing, which was adjourned until Feb. 21. A delegation from Human Rights Watch monitored the trial.

Egypt detains 45 suspected militants

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian police on Saturday detained for questioning 45 suspected members of a militant group on charges of plotting to kill high-ranking officials, sources at the prosecutor's office said. They said the detainees were members of the Qotbioun group, a spin-off of the illegal and influential Muslim Brotherhood. The group takes its name from one of the Brotherhood's key members, Sayed Qotb, who was executed by the state in the 1960s. The group believes that the structure of Egyptian society contradicts Islamic principles and that Islamic law is the only true way to govern. Unlike the Brotherhood, which believes in changing the government by political means, the sources said the Qotbioun resort to violence. More than 1,000 people have been killed and hundreds wounded since militant groups began fighting the government in 1992 to set up a strict Islamic state. Police captured the group, and seven of their leaders, in several districts of Cairo, the sources said. The prosecutor will hold them in custody for 15 days pending investigations, they added.

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IN BRIEF

EA position
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Islamists to death
The highest court in Jordan has sentenced a small number of Islamists to death for the 1995 killing of a prominent politician. The court also sentenced others to life imprisonment and others to shorter jail terms for carrying out the killing of a prominent politician.

in court for rights report
A Turkish publisher and translator, Friday, accused of publishing a report on human rights in Jordan. The publisher and translator, Friday, accused of publishing a report on human rights in Jordan.

suspected militants
Jordan police on Saturday arrested suspected militants in a plot to kill a prominent politician. The police on Saturday arrested suspected militants in a plot to kill a prominent politician.

Muasher criticises press for 'monotonous performance'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Information Marwan Muasher Saturday criticised the Jordanian press stating that although daily newspapers enjoy high credibility they still perform monotonously and seem afraid to tackle controversial issues.

Weekly papers or tabloids have little credibility and their reports have been criticised especially in terms of news reports, the minister stated in remarks during a ceremony held at the Jordan Press Association (JPA) to swear in 23 new journalists as JPA members.

The press must remain careful and committed to reporting what government officials say in order to rebuild confidence between government and press, he said.

Accurate information and credible reporting should form the basis of the journalist trade, according to Dr. Muasher who stated that there are certain reasons to restrict press freedoms and other times the press must be empowered to tackle all topics freely without restrictions.

The minister also confirmed that the Parliamentary Administrative and Guidance Committee Tuesday will begin debate regarding a package of media draft laws.

Referring to Jordan Television, he maintained that financial constraints, bureaucracy and political developments have prevented television from pursuing its development and promoting its performance.

The government is preparing a new financial system to take care of the problem, he said.

Tabloid editor receives six-month sentence

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The 25-year old editor of a weekly tabloid, who Thursday was sentenced to six months imprisonment and ordered to pay a JD 500 fine for violating the Press and Publication Law, plans to appeal the verdict.

The sentence was harsh beyond our expectations and we plan to take the case to the Court of Appeals," Defence Attorney Mazen Majali told the Jordan Times.

Abdullah Bani Issa, former editor of Al-Hiwar, was found guilty by the Amman Court of First Instance on Thursday of publishing material considered slanderous to His Majesty King Hussein and of publishing news items covering an illegal organisation (Hezbollah).

On Jan. 6, 1996, Mr. Bani Issa, who had been detained for two days, pleaded not guilty to both charges and told the prosecutor during interrogation that there was a press code which allowed for the publication of interviews with officials from Hezb Al Tahrir and that the interview was not slanderous to the King.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, Mr. Bani Issa had permitted the publication of an interview with Islamist spokesman Atta Abu Rishdeh, of the illegal Hezb Al Tahrir (Liberation Party), to be published in October of 1995.

Mr. Abu Rishdeh, 53, was sentenced to three years imprisonment in 1996 after being found guilty by the State Security Court of slandering His Majesty King Hussein in the October newspaper interview.

Mr. Bani Issa, who testified for the prosecution, told the State Security Court then that he resolved to publish Mr. Abu Rishdeh's interview as he saw no Royal family names in the interview.

Al-Hiwar weekly was bankrupt five months after its establishment and Mr. Bani Issa is now the editor of the weekly Al Hayat newspaper.

Mr. Abu Rishdeh was arrested several times over the past 10 years for militant activities and affiliation with Hezb Al Tahrir, a fundamentalist group which does not recognise any existing Arab or Muslim regime and calls for establishing a caliphate style Islamic state.

Jordan Press Association (JPA) President Seif Sharif told the Jordan Times Friday that the union is planning no interference in the case.

"We do not interfere in the course of justice, and as a sentence was issued we cannot intervene," Mr. Sharif said, adding that the JPA interference "occurs only when a journalist is detained for questioning by the prosecutor."

WHAT'S GOING ON

- CONCERT**
* Performance by artists from Madaba governorate at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- PLAY**
* Play (in Arabic) entitled "Total Fiasco" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- EXHIBITIONS**
* Paintings by Muhammad Ali Shaker at the Orient Gallery, Issam Ajlount Street, Shmeisani, until Jan. 30.
* Photographic exhibition on the life of the Founder of Pakistan at Qaid-e-Azam Hall, Embassy of Pakistan, Jabbal Weibdeh (Tel. 622787, 624680), until January 31.
* Works by contemporary Arab artists entitled "The New Collection" at Darat Al Funon, Jabbal Weibdeh, (Tel. 643251/2), until Feb. 27.
* Works by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Jan. 30.

Jordan Times
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University increases hourly wage for student workers

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The University of Jordan has increased the hourly wage for students working on campus from 600 fils to 700 fils to encourage more students to join the work programme.

Waleed Ma'ani, vice-president of administrative affairs said this week.

The campus work programme, which enables students to work up to 20 hours per week, offers students the opportunity to earn money while gaining work experience.

Some students work in the library and reading rooms while others opt to work in university hostels.

"Many women choose to work in our all-female hostels for religious reasons," Dr. Ma'ani said.

He affirmed that last year a total of JD30,700 was proffered to students involved in the programme.

"I estimate that we will employ approximately 150 students this semester," he added.

Other financial aid includes loans and grants from the university student fund.

This semester, 70 students, out of 206 applicants, were offered grants.

The 136 students who did not receive these grants may apply for a student loan, however many students do not apply for available loans.

"Students prefer grants to loans as many fear they will not find subsequent employment to pay back the loan," Dr. Ma'ani said.

The loan requires the students to begin repayment six months after graduation.

Heretofore, this semester, 517 students have received loans, 18 less than the 535 students who applied last semester.

Loan prerequisites include a high grade point average as well as proof of financial need.

The student fund was established in 1974, "in the hopes of encouraging academic excellence and affording students the opportunity to attend the university who otherwise could not," Dr. Ma'ani said.

"The fund is now almost completely self-supporting as it is replenished when students pay back their loans," boasted Dr. Ma'ani.

However, Dr. Ma'ani lamented the lack of outside benefactors which, he said, limits the number of grants to students.

"We have only around 20 benefactors from which eight students have received grants this year, we would love to award more grants but cannot afford to do so," he said.

Dr. Ma'ani estimates that approximately JD 100,000 was spent from the student fund this academic year.

New parties emerge urging social reform

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The peace process and normalisation with Israel at the regional level as well as the need for stemming tribalism and initiating social reforms at the national level emerged as the key-points in the political programmes of the newly-established Jordan Popular Movement (JPM) and Jordan's Peace Party.

While some observers and scientists see disaffection and indifference towards organised political life in the high number of political parties, the founders of the new parties maintain that there is a widespread need for new and more modern parties, shaped on Jordan's changing political, social and economic contexts.

In fact, the end of 1996 was marked by the registration of four new political parties which raised the number of political groupings in the Kingdom to 26.

Together with the JPM and the Peace Party, two new groups, the Arab Land Party and the Homeland Party, entered into the political arena.

At the international level, the Arab-Israeli peace process has both created economic development opportunities and presented new political challenges, such as the thorny question of the normalisation process with Israel, JPM Secretary General Jamal Khatib stated.

"The peace process initiated political debate and our main goal is to deal with new Jordanian realities," Dr. Khatib told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

Stressing the role of the 1992 Madrid conference as a turning point in the history of both Jordan and the Arab World, Dr. Khatib called for "a real and significant normalisation process" as opposed to "empty slogans."

"The normalisation process will gradually be implemented, but the present phase needs to be translated into concrete action," he said.

Leader of the Peace Party Shaher Khreis echoed Dr. Khatib in both supporting the peace accord and criticising the current phase in Arab-Israeli relations.

Notwithstanding the long-awaited finalisation of the Hebron agreement, under which the Israeli pull-out from the Palestinian town commenced Friday, Dr. Khreis criticised the policies of hard-liner Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"For the first time in the history of Israel, most powers are being concentrated in the hands of the prime minister and I do not think such an experiment will bring positive results," Dr. Khreis commented.

If at the international level both leaders seem to share similar points of view and praised the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein, at the domestic level the Peace Party places a greater emphasis on the need for socio-economic reforms, while the 450-strong JPM, mostly middle-class, insists on the fight against tribalism.

"Our party calls on all the people to demonstrate their strong support for the Hashemite leadership and King Hussein," said Dr. Khreis, who started his political career in the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party and has militated in professional unions.

"Under the leadership of King Hussein, Jordan was able to play its unique role in the peace process, gaining a new status and regional and international recognition," added Dr. Khatib, referring in particular to the vital role the King played in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations of the recent agreement for the Israeli redeployment from Hebron.

According to Dr. Khatib, in what he defined as the political culture which should prevail in Jordan, "citizens should be loyal to their parties and not to their tribes and they should shape their political stands on the basis of ideology and not on the basis of their own or their relatives' benefit."

In a democratic society, citizens should be party-oriented, and not tribe-oriented, he summarised.

Education, pensions, job opportunities and financial measures to favour small and medium businesses are the main issues to be tackled internally, said Peace Party's Dr. Khreis.

As for the election law slated for passage before the November 1997 general elections, Dr. Khreis formulated a comprehensive articulated proposal which envisages the raise in the number of parliamentary seats from the current 80 up to 120, one-third of which should be reserved for minorities.

Of the forty seats reserved, "at least 17 should be allocated to women and 11 to refugees, who constitute a large portion of Jordanian society and should be given adequate representation in Parliament," he said.

According to Dr. Khreis' proposed election law, in each of the twelve constituencies, every given voter would be granted the possibility of expressing three preferences: "One for the candidate who could serve him/her at the local level, the second for the candidate who could serve him/her at the national level, and the third for a minority candidate," he said.

Kingdom to combat desertification with executive programme

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan has embarked on the preparation of an executive programme to combat desertification, Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development (AOAD) Director General Yahya Bakour announced Saturday.

AOAD specialists will help implement the study, he added.

The study identified desertification problems as well as pollutants affecting the environment and Dr. Bakour maintained that the desertification-combating programme is slated to last 20 years — from 1997 until 2017.

He explained that the programme's priority projects will be implemented in the first five years of the time frame and that Jordan and the AOAD have divided the project into 16 segments.

The AOAD-sponsored study suggested the establishment of a coordination committee to create a national fund to stem desertification while maintaining cooperation with the AOAD.

AOAD Regional Director Abdul Hamid Kayed described the programme as delineating three objectives in dealing with land which receives very little rain:

- Preventing future deterioration of pasture lands that they might become productive again.
- Increasing the production of animal feed from pastures
- Increasing the kingdom's livestock wealth.

The study encourages active public participation and environment and drought awareness, Dr. Kayed maintained.

He also said that the study calls for the implementation of a comprehensive plan for afforestation and soil protection as well as discouragement of expanding urban regions to the detriment of agricultural territory and increasing research and agricultural extension services.

The study also recommends the establishment of a specialised department within the Ministry of Agriculture to maintain pasture lands of which, it says, Jordan is in large part comprised.

Ministerial committee reviews water situation

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Interior Awad Khleifat Saturday chaired a water and agricultural ministerial committee meeting to discuss the water situation in Jordan.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti attended part of the meeting which focused on the quality of water pumped to farmlands as well as underground and surface water available in the country.

A statement released following the meeting affirmed that the government will take a number of measures to minimise wastewater as well as factory waste water treatment.

The committee groups ministers of water and irrigation, municipal and rural affairs and the environment, agriculture, planning and the minister of state for prime ministry affairs.

The statement affirmed that the committee will hold a follow-up meeting next week.

Meanwhile, the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Saturday announced that rain over the past few days has added 1.097 million cubic metres to those reservoirs mainly used for irrigation purposes.

The announcement delineated the largest amount of rain water as measured in the King Talal dam which received 915,000 cubic metres. Altogether, it said, the Kingdom's dams now altogether contain 51,382 million cubic metres with the King Talal Dam comprising 39.1 million.

Tragic accidents claim three lives

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An 80-year-old woman and two children were killed Friday in three separate tragic incidents in Amman, Baqaa and Zarqa, police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports said.

In the Ramzi neighbourhood of Zarqa, two-and-a-half-year-old Mohammad Lyman, was killed when the aluminium roof of the kitchen he was standing in collapsed while he was showering.

The mother of the child told police that she was cleaning and moving stored objects from the kitchen when the incident occurred.

In the Baqaa Refugee Camp on Friday an 11-year-old child, identified as Mohammad Sabri, was instantly killed after being struck by a pick-up truck driven by Ghassan Ismael.

Traffic officials blamed the truck driver for falling to yield to pedestrians.

In the Abu Alanda area, an 80-year old woman was burned to death while taking a bath in her home, CDD reports said.


A CDD official told the Jordan Times Saturday that the woman, Shama' Mfadi, went to draw a bath and took a kerosene heater with her.

"Apparently the woman placed the heater in proximity of clothes hanging in the bathroom and they caught on fire engulfing the area," the CDD official said.

The woman was rushed to Al Bashir hospital by CDD units but declared "dead on arrival," official reports said.

A CDD official urged people to take precautionary measures when handling portable heaters such as keeping them in a safe area away from children.

Another measure would be to keep the heaters away from flammable materials such as curtains, clothes and furniture, he said.

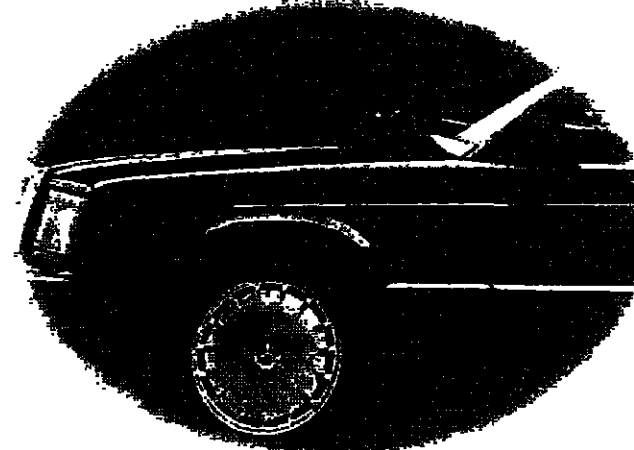


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Suu Kyi slams secret trials as Burma jails 20

BANGKOK (AP) — The opposition leader Suu Kyi slammed the government's secret trials of 20 people arrested in the north of Burma on Saturday.

The seven-year-old leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) said the government's actions were a "gross violation of human rights."

The NLD said the government had arrested the 20 people in the north of Burma, a region known for its ethnic tensions.

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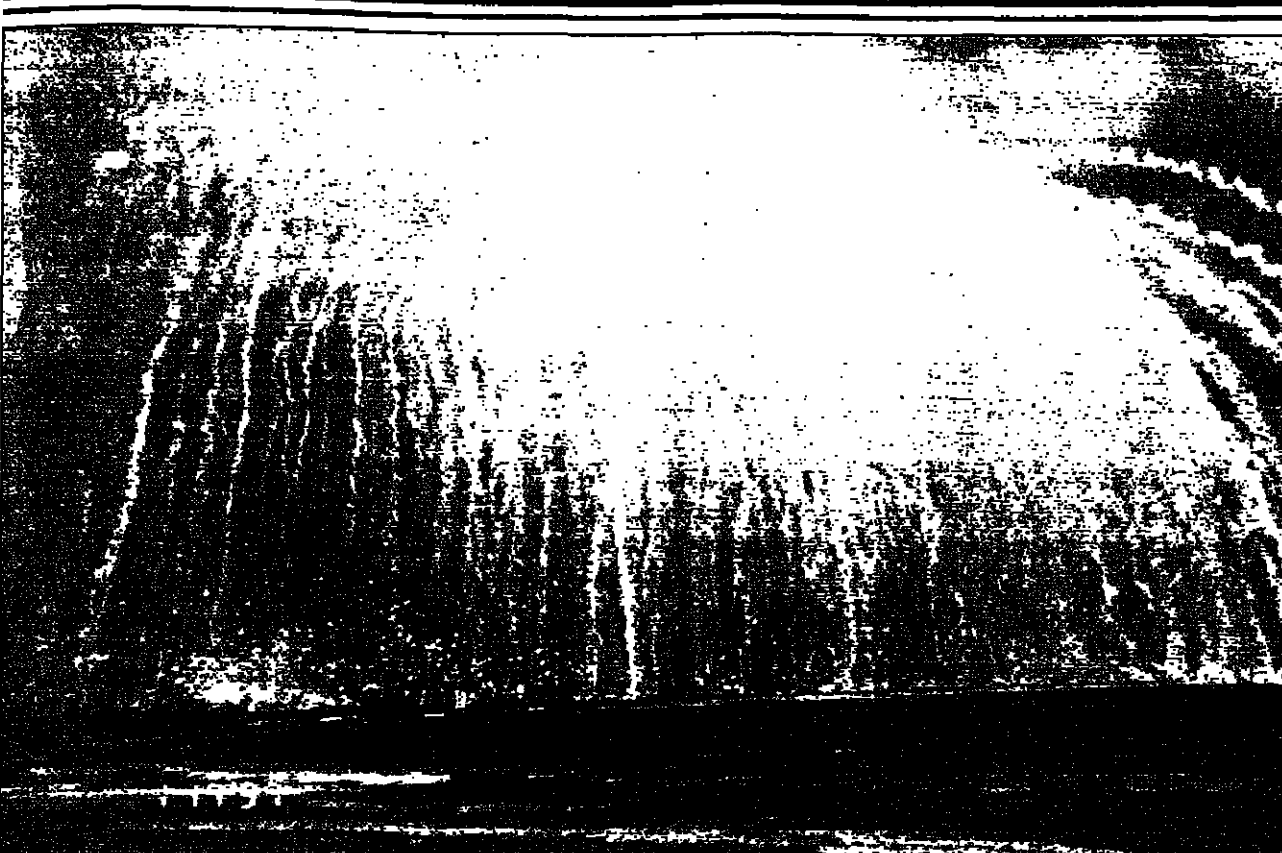
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World News



A Delta II rocket carrying a global positioning satellite explodes after liftoff from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, raining debris for miles Friday. The air force has declined to speculate as to the cause of the problem (Reuters photo)

U.S. Delta rocket explodes on takeoff

CAPE CANAVERAL (R) — An unmanned Delta II rocket carrying a \$40 million U.S. Air Force navigation satellite exploded Friday just after liftoff, scattering flaming debris and sending billowing smoke for miles.

About 13 seconds after the 11:28 a.m. (1628 GMT) liftoff from Cape Canaveral Air Station, a system designed to detect problems with the rocket triggered its destruction, U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Robert Hinson, wing commander of the 45th Space Wing, said.

"At T plus 13 seconds there was a self destruct initiated, which resulted in the total destruction of the Delta and its payload," he said. That, in turn, prompted air force flight safety personnel to send a precautionary destruct signal to minimise danger from the falling of any large fragments to the ground.

He declined to speculate about what might have caused the explosion and

said the air force had formed an early investigation team, which would be replaced by a formal board of inquiry later.

"The loss of any launch vehicle is catastrophic to us. We rely on 100 per cent launch capability," Gen. Hinson said.

The Delta rocket launch programme began in the late 1950s when NASA contracted McDonnell Douglas to modify its Thor ballistic missile as a space launcher. Today it is a mainstay of the U.S. unmanned space fleet.

Last year NASA entrusted the rocket with the launch of two Mars probes, which spearheaded NASA's return to the red planet, an effort costing hundreds of millions of dollars.

This year the Delta is slated to launch several satellites for the Iridium Project, a web of 66 low-orbit satellites that will ring the Earth, providing virtually worldwide wireless communications. Motorola has about a 25 per cent stake in the

Taleban radio announces capture of province northeast of Kabul

KABUL (AFP) — The Taleban Islamic militia has seized Kapisa province in northeast Afghanistan, driving back the forces of the opposition coalition, the Taleban's Radio Shariat announced Saturday.

The report could not be immediately confirmed, but if the Taleban did take the province it would indicate opposition forces are in dire straits, incapable of resisting the Taleban advance and retreating to the Hindu Kush Mountains further north, analysts said.

Radio Shariat said the Islamic militia pursued mopping up operations in Kapisa region Friday and captured "dozens of soldiers" loyal to northern warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum as well as armoured vehicles and heavy artillery.

Mr. Dostum, who had served as military chief in the ousted Communist regime, is among prominent leaders of the anti-Taleban coalition which includes forces loyal to Ahmad Shah Masood, the military strongman of deposed President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Radio Shariat said the militia took control of main towns in Kapisa province, including the capital, Mahmud Raqi.

"The enemy has lost the capacity to resist and has fled to the mountains," the radio said.

Informed sources said the anti-Taleban forces retreated, in many cases without a fight and leaving heavy ordnance behind, after the Islamic militia captured a strategic bridge in the northern part of the province and cut off the resistance.

The capture of the bridge was followed by the Taleban's dramatic success in taking the Bagram Air Base, 50 kilometres north of Kabul as well as Charikar, capital of Parwan province, a little further north.

Radio Shariat also said a fighter aircraft of the opposition coalition was shot down near Charikar midday Friday by a U.S.-made Stinger missile. No independent confirmation of the report was available.

The opposition forces now control a tiny part of

the region south of the Hindu Kush Mountains, in the north and northeast of Parwan province.

This region is considered vital as the Salang Tunnel leading to Mr. Masood's traditional bastion of Panjshir Valley is located there.

The strategic Salang Tunnel, built by the Soviet Union during the 1960s to 120 kilometres to the north of Kabul, leads to the northern regions still controlled by the different factions of the anti-Taleban coalition.

The Taleban are in control of more than two-thirds of the country, including Kabul which they took last September.

Meanwhile, the head of the U.N. special peace mission to Afghanistan, Norbert Hol, appealed for an immediate ceasefire Saturday as the Taleban militia drove north towards the Panjshir Valley.

The fighting was all the more "disturbing" as it started soon after a working group meeting in Islamabad attended by representatives of the Taleban Islamic militia and its opponents. U.N. sources quoted Mr. Hol as saying.

Mr. Hol emphasised that a cessation of hostilities would help the process of dialogue that was "so well" begun in Islamabad and save it from being put in jeopardy.

Continued fighting would also send the wrong signal on the eve of a major U.N.-sponsored international meeting due to start at Ashkabad in Turkmenistan in three days to mobilise humanitarian aid for Afghans, Mr. Hol said.

Mr. Hol noted that statements by some Afghans during the Jan. 13-15 Islamabad talks did not reflect the "friendly and frank" discussions held in the working group that covered all major issues.

This was an apparent reference to a statement by Taleban Deputy Foreign Minister Sher Mohammed Stanakzai rejecting a Taleban withdrawal from Kabul or its demilitarisation as demanded by the anti-Taleban alliance.

Suspected IRA attack in Belfast thwarted

BELFAST (R) — Police foiled a suspected Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrilla attack when they seized grenades and a horizontal mortar in a Roman Catholic area of Belfast Friday.

One man was arrested and two bags containing the home-made weapons were abandoned on the pavement and in a garden of the Old Park area of north Belfast, police said.

Security sources said it appeared that an attack on police patrolling the area by IRA guerrillas fighting British rule may have been imminent.

The haul comprised two improvised grenades, usually fired from a rocket launcher, and a mortar and launcher of the sort the IRA uses to attack police and British security targets.

The grenades were of the type used last week in a daylight attack on the Belfast high court buildings, a prestige symbol of British rule.

The discovery underlined northern Ireland's worsening security situation after a spate of IRA attacks this year and two suspected reprisals by pro-British Protestant "loyalists."

No-one has been killed this year but loyalist spokesmen have threatened to end a two-year truce if the IRA kills anyone in its 1997 campaign.

On Thursday night the head of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Ronnie Flanagan, said the IRA appeared determined to kill a member of the overwhelmingly Protestant police force.

"They (the IRA) are trying to kill police officers at the moment. We have had a whole series of attacks that are very real attempts to kill," he told a television audience.

Since New Year's Eve the IRA has fired mortar bombs at police patrols and at a border police station. One policeman was injured in the high court attack.

The devices were found in an area called Rosebank Gardens in the Ardoyne area of Belfast, which is inhabited by members of the Roman Catholic minority from which the IRA draws support.

Police said troops and police made the arrest and discovery after "suspicious activity" in the area.

Belfast has been on high alert this year after the IRA targeted Northern Ireland for the first time since an August 1994 truce by bombing Britain's Northern Ireland army base.

South Korean unions scale down strikes; clashes erupt

SEOUL (R) — South Korean strike leaders Saturday abandoned calls for indefinite stoppages in protest at a controversial labour law as riot police clashed violently with workers in the streets of central Seoul.

Separately, police arrested a shipyard unionist in the southeastern city of Ulsan, bringing to five the number of union heads picked up since South Korean courts last week issued warrants for the arrest of 20 labour leaders.

In a sign union bosses were willing under pressure, the leader of the outlandish Korean Confederation of Trade Unions said its members would limit industrial action.

But a brief clash between riot police and 4,000 workers and students showed passions were still inflamed over the law, which allows companies to dismiss workers and replace strikers.

"From next week, full strikes will take place only Wednesday. On other weekdays, union members will work normally," Kwon Young Kil told a news conference.

Mr. Kwon warned of an "all-out struggle" from Feb. 18 unless the government promised to revise the labour law.

Mr. Kwon and six deputies, who have led more than three weeks of stoppages that have now largely tapered off, are sheltering from arrest at Myeongdong Cathedral in central Seoul.

Police vehicles fired vol-

leys of teargas at the 4,000 protesters following a noisy rally in what has become a regular sight in Seoul since the law was rammed through parliament at dawn on Dec. 26 while opposition deputies slept.

The protesters, trying to march on Myeongdong some four kilometres away, fought back with iron rods and ripped up paving stones to hurl at police before being dispersed.

Later, hundreds regrouped in shopping alleys near the cathedral and fought running battles with riot police. The clashes ended after less than an hour.

The government has heaped pressure on the Confederation fugitives, keeping a tight security noose around the church, preventing union activists from getting in or out.

In Ulsan, police arrested Kim Il-Shik, Confederation leader of Hyundai Heavy Industries, the country's largest shipyard, in an early morning raid.

Police said Mr. Kim was charged with obstructing business.

Earlier this week four union officials from Halla Heavy Industries were arrested on similar charges. State prosecutors have warned the strike leaders they faced arrest unless they dropped industrial action immediately.

An aide to Mr. Kwon said the Confederation was changing tactics to prolong the protests, aiming more at a political struggle.

"If it is impossible to force this government to revise the law then we will have to oust it in the next election and seek a revision by a new ruling camp," he said.

South Korea is due to hold presidential elections in December. President Kim Young-Sam is limited to one term.

Mr. Kim's popularity has plunged since his ruling New Korea Party railroaded the labour bill through parliament.

He has refused to revise or revoke the law, arguing that labour reform is crucial to trim corporate costs and improve international competitiveness.

Seizing on public dismay at the forced passage of the law, the opposition has thrown its weight behind union leaders.

Groups of opposition politicians, including main leader Kim Dae-Jung and a number of parliamentarians, collected signatures in Seoul Saturday to demand the government repeal the law.

Labour Ministry officials said Saturday the strikes had faded. The ministry said some 30,000 workers were on strike.

The Confederation provided no comparative turnout.

Highlighting that only pockets of resistance remain, Hyundai Motor Co. Ltd. the nation's largest carmaker, reopened Saturday after a week of temporary shutdowns.

Bulgarian Socialist dissidents discuss rival party

SOFIA (R) — Dissidents from Bulgaria's Socialist Party met to discuss forming a rival leftist coalition Saturday as the ruling party insisted on forming a new government despite a 13th day of mass protests.

With the government and opposition as far apart as ever on the timing of a general election, opposition deputies said they were hoping that, if the Socialists formed a new cabinet, enough deputies would vote against it to force dissolution of parliament and a quick election.

National radio reported protests, rallies and concerts in a score of towns around the country to demonstrate against economic misery and for general elections not constitutionally required for almost another two years.

The new left in Bulgaria coalition, proposed by the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) reformist wing and a small, Liberal Marxist Party, would bring together prominent BSP reformers and representatives of other leftist organisations, as well as four deputies who left the BSP Thursday.

"I am here because of an illusion and because of a dream," Socialist Deputy Nikolai Kamov, head of parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, told the meeting.

"The illusion is that the BSP is able to evolve to accept the values and political practices of the European left. My dream was that children born around 1989 would be able to get European passports when they turned 18."

"I think the next week will be decisive for the development of Bulgaria. I have heard many reasonable ideas here. If we can come together from the left and the right, we shall succeed."

The BSP is made up largely of former Communists who renamed the party after the end of one-party rule in 1989.

Minority ethnic Turks rallied in the southeastern town of Kardzhali, gypsies protested in Stara Zagora, and a cavalcade of taxis blocked the streets of the Danube town of Rousse Saturday.

Staff of state television said Friday they were joining the unrest to protest at government censorship.

President-elect Petar Stoyanov, who will be sworn in Sunday, says he might offer the Socialists the new ruling mandate denied them by his predecessor Zhelyu Zhelev.

The opposition Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) adamantly opposes any new mandate, demanding general

elections which the Socialists, registering a mere eight per cent support in one opinion poll, would be almost certain to lose.

Diplomats say delaying elections would aid the Socialists if polls were held after a new International Monetary Fund (IMF) accord and reforms began to bear fruit.

The IMF said it would complete talks on a tight monetary regime with a new government as soon as it was formed.

The collapsing lev currency fell to new lows below 700 to the dollar on the interbank market Friday.

The UDF said Friday it would give parliament a "few more days" to approve its "salvation declaration" calling for elections and a strict monetary regime approved by the IMF, before stepping up the pressure by calling a general strike.

Government officials appeared nervous that the president-elect's inauguration could be a flashpoint for a showdown like one a week ago when protesters ransacked parliament and clashes with police left 196 injured.

The Socialists said talks with the opposition could resume after Mr. Stoyanov becomes president. The opposition is boycotting parliament but says it will attend his inauguration.

Meanwhile, some 2,000 protesters gathered in this ethnic Turkish region of southern Bulgaria Saturday to add their voice to nationwide demands for the government of former Communists to quit.

Bulgaria's 800,000 Turks have a special grudge against the ruling Socialists, recalling efforts to make them change their names to Bulgarian ones and discourage Islam in the last years of Communist dictatorship which forced many to flee to Turkey.

But the rally in cold and fog in the town of Kardzhali was fired less by ethnic tensions than the anger, shared by most Bulgarians, at poverty deepened by inflation of more than 300 per cent and widely blamed on Socialist mismanagement.

"We don't know what to do," said Ahmed Sargun, a retired miner. "My pension is only enough to buy 100 loaves of bread a month. My son fled Bulgaria to seek a better job in Turkey. I hope he is doing better."

France ready to accelerate EU, NATO expansion

PRAGUE (R) — French Foreign Minister Herve De Charette said Friday that France was ready to speed up the process of expanding the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and he backed Czech hopes to join the EU by the year 2000.

"France is determined to support and even accelerate all processes concerning enlargement of the EU and the Atlantic alliance," Mr. De Charette told a joint news conference with Czech Foreign Minister Josef Zielenec.

"We consider that it is a strategic choice which is

important for European unity, not only for current members but also for candidates."

The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are seen as leading candidates to be the first new members of both the NATO and the EU.

"I think it would be realistic to talk about the end of our negotiations with the EU at the end of the millennium," Mr. Zielenec told the news conference. "I entirely agree," said Mr. De Charette.

When the Czech Republic, which has an association agreement with Brussels, applied to join the EU,

Yeltsin illness puts succession issue back on the agenda

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Russian president's latest illness has revived the political fortunes of his rival General Alexander Lebed, to the alarm of the political and economic elites but the delight of most ordinary Russians.

For President Boris Yeltsin, Friday was his 10th day at the Kremlin Central Hospital where he is officially said to have pneumonia.

Doctors have gradually admitted that his illness is "fairly serious" but a Kremlin spokesman said Friday that his condition was "improving" and that he would be able to leave hospital next week.

But this new illness so soon after his multiple heart by-pass operation on Nov. 5, is now regarded by political analysts as serious enough to warrant bringing the issue of Mr. Yeltsin's succession into the open.

"Pneumonia for an elderly man recovering from a heart operation, is in itself

quite serious. It can no longer be ruled out that the president may be forced to resign, not under any kind of pressure but for quite objective reasons," said Andrei Pyontkovsky, director of the Centre for Strategic Studies.

Gen. Lebed who is the favourite to succeed Mr. Yeltsin, said he was certain the president would not complete his mandate which runs until 2000. He said the country was ripe to "fall into his arms."

An opinion poll published Thursday in the Nezavisimaya Gazeta could only have reinforced Gen. Lebed's optimism. It showed that 58.4 per cent of Russians had confidence in Gen. Lebed, far more than in all other political leaders, including Mr. Yeltsin who made only 22.6 per cent.

But at the same time, a large section of the political elite has begun mobilising to block the ascension of the unpredictable general, or failing this, to limit the consequences.

Yegor Stroyev, the president of the Federation Council — the upper chamber of parliament — has proposed amending the constitution to give parliament more powers and thus limit those of the head of state.

The move is mainly to prevent Mr. Yeltsin's successor abusing the very extensive powers the president enjoys under the existing constitution.

"Even the leaders of the present regime might agree to limit the president's powers if this job went to someone like Lebed," said analyst Sergei Markov of the Carnegie Foundation in Moscow.

"Before, the stability of the regime called for a strong president. It may require a weak president tomorrow," he said.

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Same principles for Sudan

BY BACKING Sudan in its current war against the Sudan People's Liberation Army, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti acted in harmony with Jordan's long-standing policy of full support for the territorial integrity of Arab countries and the rejection of foreign intervention in the domestic affairs of sovereign states. Jordan has always believed that internal problems should be solved through peaceful means. Dialogue should never give way to violence.

But dialogue cannot be viable unless the political environment is right. The pressure for creating such environment falls on the government as much as it does on the opposition. In Sudan, neither the government nor the opposition have done what it takes to encourage dialogue and address the concerns of both parties in a reasonable, pragmatic and peaceful manner.

While that environment should be created, the priority now is to end the current violence and to curb foreign intervention by Ethiopia and Eritrea if the two countries are truly involved in supporting the secessionist rebels. Until that happens, Sudan should be supported. But after this mission is accomplished, the Sudanese regime cannot expect the support of its people unless it carries out the political and economic reforms without which Sudan and the Sudanese will remain hostage to hunger, fear and instability.

It is no secret that the Sudanese people are hurting, and they have been for a while now. The regime has persecuted the opposition, driven the country to the brink of bankruptcy and all but isolated the country from the international community. And as it did all of that, it failed to find a lasting settlement to the conflict with the southern rebels.

The Sudanese regime needs to realise that a profound change in the policies of Sudan must be introduced and the conflict with the south should be approached with innovative ways that recognise the interests of the country and the particularities of the south. Democracy and the right of people to choose within the framework of an enlightened constitution should govern the talks that the Sudanese government and the southern rebels should launch in order to settle their differences. The higher interests of Sudan should be the only factor on which there should be no compromise. The regime and the people of the south will probably be able to find an acceptable solution if both are convinced of the sincerity and seriousness of each other in building a new Sudan in which all enjoy equality and democratic and human rights in full.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

NOW THAT Arab sovereignty has been restored to Hebron, the Jewish settlers there have no alternative but to coexist peacefully with the Arab inhabitants so that negotiations for a final settlement can go ahead as planned, said Al Ra'i editorial Saturday. It said that if the present settlers consider themselves the grandchildren of the Jews who had lived in the city in old times, they must do their best to behave like their ancestors, who were guaranteed safety by the overwhelming Arab majority, and have to abandon their hostile attitude towards the Arab residents of the city, urged the paper. As to the Arab people of Hebron, they feel that the dawn of freedom has emerged after the darkness of the past decades and they undoubtedly, under the present circumstances, will regard the Jewish minority living in their midst as a fact of life and therefore try to avoid any friction with them because peaceful coexistence with the settlers is bound to have its beneficial impact on the coming Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on a final settlement, added the paper. Indeed, said the paper, the new experiment and its outcome will serve as an example on which much of the future of this region depends. The paper said that the future negotiations between the two sides will depend on a peaceful situation in Hebron, free of all forms of violence and resort to force.

A WRITER for Al Dustour accused Israel of being behind the current conflict between Sudan and its neighbours, saying that Israel is encouraging and fuelling this war with the purpose of depriving Sudan and Egypt of their control over the River Nile waters. Muhammad Kawash said that Israel does not conceal its intentions of exercising pressures on Egypt through strengthening the hands of nations that control the source of the Nile and it is currently in contact with Turkey, at the military and economic levels, with the hope that Ankara would continue its hostile attitude towards Iraq and Syria to deprive them of the river waters. The writer said that in light of the current war waged against Sudan, with backing from Eritrea and Ethiopia, Egypt has no alternative but to interfere and put an end to attempts to split up its southern neighbour. The writer said that by defending Sudan, Egypt will be defending its own national interests and guarantee its own water supplies from the River Nile.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

UNDP 1996 report needs careful analysing to formulate strategies

SOCIAL SCIENTISTS pointed out long time ago that the size of the gross domestic product (GDP) and the rate of its annual growth by no means serve as a sole indicator of human development or quality of life in a given country.

There are, they claim, other ways to measure and monitor human developments which are not necessarily reflected in the GDP, such as life expectancy at birth, the availability of basic education, level of enrolment in schools and literacy rate, and the standard of living of the population.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has started to issue annual reports since 1990 to measure human development in all countries of the world, using certain criteria and parameters which are consistently refined and improved year after year. The UNDP report produces an overall index of human development to facilitate comparisons across countries and to monitor changes from one year to another in the same country.

The report highlights the non-economic factors, and tries to discount GDP as a single indicator to measure development. Yet the actual results prove beyond doubt that per capita GDP and its growth remain the most important factor, because other indicators are directly influenced by the level of income. This is evident in the UNDP report rating Arab countries according to the level of human development.

We find that the rich oil-exporting countries occupy the upper part of the scale while the poor, non-oil producing and exporting countries take the lower part of the list. Jordan was placed after all oil-producing countries, and ahead of all non-oil producing countries, an indication that Jordan is doing well within the limitation of its means.

The international report is not only informative, it also helps decision makers in many development countries to identify the weak points in their policies of social and economic development.

It also prods governments to do more on the human level. But the 1996 report also embarrassed many governments which were claiming to have achieved social miracles when, according to the report, their record proved to be wanting.

Some countries did not like their position on the world-wide map of human development as reflected in the international report. They decided to issue their own national reports. They include such Arab countries as Egypt, Iraq and Tunisia. Similar attempts are under way in Lebanon and Palestine.

The real objective of these politically motivated endeavours is to improve the image of the ruling class which would like to put forward a beautiful record of real or imaginative achievements.

Question is who would believe these national reports if

they came up with results different from those given by the international report, and how can we compare the level of human development among countries if based on criteria which vary from one country to another to suite the local requirements?

Of course various points of view can be offered on the best method to measure human development, but it should be admitted that the United Nations is the most qualified agency to set unified rules, especially when they are subjected to continued revision and improvement.

The UNDP report enjoys high credibility and no political regime on earth can ignore its results or provide a convincing substitute, no matter how hard it may try.

The UNDP presented its 1996 report in Jordan in a big and noisy celebration. However, the report did not draw the attention and the analysis it deserves, neither in government circles nor in the media. Public awareness of the report is not sufficiently strong. No one tried to dwell on the weak points in Jordan's human development as depicted by the report and formulate a strategy to tackle such points.

We should make up for this shortcoming before we get involved in the preparation of our own Jordanian report on human development for local consumption.

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Erez: Peres one, Netanyahu zero

By Gwynne Dyer

LIKE STAR-crossed lovers, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat only meet in the dead of night, but their last meeting seems to have done the trick. Early in the morning of Jan. 15, at the Erez border crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip, Netanyahu and Arafat agreed on prompt Israeli withdrawal from Hebron, and an 18-month schedule for Israeli evacuation of rural areas of the West Bank.

After eight months and a lot of heavy breathing, Netanyahu and Arafat have something they can call their own. This is not the Oslo accords, signed years ago by a defunct Israeli government, or some promise made to Arafat by martyred Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin. This is a deal "Bibi" Netanyahu made himself, and will find it very hard to disown. The Middle East peace process is back on the rails.

Just joking, of course. It is still in deep, deep trouble. But it has not completely self-destructed yet, because

nobody, not even Netanyahu, has any alternative to put in its place except war. And now that he has made his first major concession to reality, it is a good time to ask if Netanyahu is really as intelligent as he obviously thinks he is.

Four months ago, when Netanyahu opened a tunnel under Temple Mount in Jerusalem and triggered violent protests that led to 79 deaths, you could plausibly argue that he was a clever man who simply intended to destroy the peace process. After all, that is precisely what many of those who voted for Netanyahu wanted.

But if Netanyahu truly were one of those people himself, then he could never have brought himself to sign this week's deal with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which requires 80 per cent of the city of Hebron to be handed over to Palestinian control. This would have been the point where he drew a line in the sand, and defied the rest of the world (and half of Israel itself).

He has not done that, so now we know that he really is a

player, not a fanatic in disguise. His goal is to give as little land back to the Palestinians as possible, over as long a time as possible. He undoubtedly sees some things as non-negotiable (Jerusalem, perhaps, and full Palestinian sovereignty). But he will make deals, and he accepts that some concessions must be made.

So he is a player... but is he a good player? Do his tactics get what he wants for Israel (whatever that is)? And here one must be permitted a little doubt.

Admittedly, Netanyahu is up against a wily and subtle opponent. Not poor old Yasser Arafat, who is about as wily and subtle as Fred Flintstone, but Shimon Peres, the real architect of the Oslo accords and Netanyahu's predecessor as prime minister.

Peres, as a colleague in the Knesset once remarked, "only stops scheming when he is asleep." He studies his adversaries, their tactics and their weaknesses, and he plans many moves ahead.

Peres' short-term goal is to preserve and advance the peace agreement even under

an Israeli government that is fundamentally hostile to it. His long-term goal is to replace that government and return to power. And I would be willing to bet that Peres bequeathed the Hebron issue to Netanyahu because he foresaw what use Netanyahu would try to make of it, and how that would entangle the Likud leader in a deal he could not refuse.

Hebron, the last of the urban areas on the West Bank to be returned to Palestinian control, was supposed to be evacuated by Israeli troops ten months ago, well before the June election. Peres postponed that handover because of all the Hamas and Islamic Jihad suicide bombings going off in Israel before the election (bombs that were intended to get Netanyahu elected, and did).

But why didn't Peres hand Hebron over after his election defeat, but before he left power? It would have been a defensive action, in fulfilment of an overdue Israeli diplomatic commitment. But Peres preferred to leave the decision and timing of the Hebron handover to the incoming government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

It was a poisoned apple. Peres, who knows far more about the rest of the world than Netanyahu (despite the latter's American mannerisms), understood that there simply was no way for Israel to avoid handing the city over. Its Arab neighbours, the Europeans, even the United States, simply would not tolerate such a blatant violation of the Oslo accords.

But Peres also foresaw that Netanyahu, if given the opportunity, would try to use Hebron as a bargaining counter not understanding that he simply had no leeway on the issue. Specifically, Netanyahu would stall and stall on the Hebron issue, hoping to turn it into a crisis so big that when he finally gave in, nobody would demand that he make any further concessions (like handing back the rural areas) for a long time.

So Peres left him Hebron to deal with, and Netanyahu stalled and stalled on it — and in the process, as Peres must have hoped, he annoyed, alienated, or downright infuriated, practically every important player on the Middle East

stage. They got so fed up with Netanyahu's tactics that when the Palestinian side started linking the far more important issue of Israeli withdrawal from rural areas of the West Bank to the Hebron deal, not even Washington objected. They just twisted Netanyahu's arm harder.

So now he is stuck with a withdrawal agreement he signed himself, a rebellious cabinet, and a deeply divided country. If he does not produce a steady flow of concessions on the ground (the three-phase timetable for withdrawal from rural areas runs until August 1998), he will become an international pariah. If he does make the concessions, his own coalition may break up under the strain, forcing him to form a "government of national unity" with Peres' Labour Party.

But maybe all this is just coincidence and random chance. Maybe Peres had no idea of the difficulties that the Hebron issue would lead the Netanyahu government into. Maybe pigs have wings.

Singapore — Career and car and nowhere to go

By Bob Holmes

NORTH AND south Korea are not Asia's only candidates for possible reunification. Malaysia and Singapore have not ruled out the possibility, either.

Such a move is not imminent, but leaders of both nations, which were united under the Malaysian Federation from 1963 to 1965, have acknowledged that it could happen — eventually.

The divorce 31 years ago, over ethnic and political disagreements, was acrimonious. Since then, both have benefited from high economic growth and have kept the lid on potentially combustible race relations.

They are regarded as almost model societies by many envious governments, and until now, reunification has not been an issue.

Then, earlier this year, Singapore's senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, the patriarch who led the little island to economic success, surprised everyone by saying that one day the two states could reunite.

Singapore had to remain competitive, organised and tightly knit, or it would eventually be "absorbed," he told an open-mouthed audience. "Rejoining would be difficult to achieve for a very long time, but I hope that one day it will happen."

Almost as surprising was Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir's refusal to dismiss the

time is yet," he commented. "Maybe one day."

It set the chattering classes of both countries into overdrive. Editorials expounded. Readers wrote in. Radio stations polled listeners, and almost everyone was against the idea.

Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong raised the issue again during his annual national day speech in August. This time, however, it was clear the island's leadership was using the issue as a warning to its citizens. "Don't slacken or else," was the gist of the message.

While saying "reunification is not on my political agenda," Goh added: "If Singapore's economic competitiveness were to falter, it could be forced to ask Malaysia to take it back — and on Malaysian terms."

That was the reason, he explained, behind Lee's remarks. He said Lee felt Malaysia was doing very well and could become even more competitive.

Goh was urging Singaporeans to keep their hands to the pump. But he did not go as far as his mentor, who also said: "If they (the Malaysians) go the whole road with us (advancing and reducing racial tensions), then I say we rejoin them because this is what we fought for."

"It will take some time," Lee continued, "but the road we are going — pursuing maximum economic benefit — if we carry it to its logical conclusion... the difference between

Singapore and Malaysia will narrow."

But he added an important rider: "We will not join unless Malaysia practices meritocracy."

This scratches old racial differences. The statement requires Malaysia to abandon its preferential treatment of Malays, who form 50 per cent of its population. Both nations have a racial mix consisting largely of Malays, Chinese and Indians, but in Singapore, Chinese form a 77 per cent majority.

Mahathir was not slow to make capital out of the perceived insult: "Singapore is using us as a bogeyman... and is practising racial discrimination itself. This can be seen by the fact that Malays are not allowed to hold high posts in the armed forces, become pilots or bear arms in that country."

Despite this tit for tat, the fact remains that there are many similarities between the states. The people share a common colonial history and the economic and physical links are strengthening.

As both societies become more sophisticated, they become more similar.

Claustrophobic Singaporeans flood over the Causeway into Malaysia to get off their overcrowded island. Many buy properties on the mainland. A second Causeway between the neighbours will open next year and a bridge is planned.

Malaysia's New Straits Times commented:

"Singapore investment in Malaysia, both in terms of property and business, is growing at such an extent that national boundaries will eventually be but a formality."

A crucial factor in any possible remarriage is that Malaysia, once smeared at by rich Singaporeans, is gaining respect. The growth rates are similar and the incomes gap is narrowing.

What is more, most Malaysians own cars — something few Singaporeans achieve because of prohibitive taxes.

Singaporeans have long worked for the five Cs — career, condo, credit card, club and car, with the last the most elusive. Malaysians are beginning to feel sorry for the poor little rich guys south of the peninsula — all dressed up and nowhere to go, except to Malaysia.

What Singaporeans need is land, and Malaysians have it. An international port city and another financial centre could be covered by the next generation of Malaysian politicians. The more one looks at a merger, the more advantages one can see for both sides.

But perhaps the biggest factor in its favour is that today's politicians have the luxury of not being around if and when it happens.

Bob Holmes is a freelance writer based in Kuala Lumpur. This article is reprinted from Gemini News Service.

LETTERS

'If you find my number, give me a ring'

To the Editor:

THE TELEPHONE "service" here is far worse than reader Ali Abunimah suggests in his letter "Telephone services not up to standard" (Jordan Times, Jan. 18, 1997).

Without exaggeration, the phone system is one of the biggest threats to Jordan's economic development. Bad quality lines, shortage of lines and extortionate charges (even after the recent small price cuts) are bad enough, but the real problem is the attitude of those in charge, as demonstrated in the article "Ammanites admit to feeling all hung-up over new phone lines" (same issue of the Jordan Times), on the installation of new phone lines in West Amman.

How can any employee of the Jordan Telecommunications Corporation (JTC) who knows anything about the modern world even begin to defend the incompetent way they have installed new lines in West Amman?

In the U.K., telephone users were given two-years notice that numbers were going to change, and the individual new numbers were known many months ahead so that people and businesses could inform their friends and clients and get their letterheads and brochures reprinted in a planned way.

The phone companies there know they have to look after their customers, not treat them with contempt.

I run a newly established regional project, which I chose to base in Amman — exactly the kind of modern service-business that Jordan must attract. I do not know if I can stay here because of our problems with the JTC. I am unable to have the phone line in my rented house in my own name. I am unable to have any extra lines. The quality of the lines makes my e-mail connections unreliable. The quality of the lines makes it nearly impossible to access the rest of the Internet. I am dreading the disruption of new phone numbers. My phone bill for one month was JD 1,800. And people try to tell me I am lucky to have the lines at all. The reality is that if this continues, I will have to take my business elsewhere.

The short-sightedness is breathtaking. Rather than trying to help and support new ventures, officials and others here seem determined to grab as much from us as they can, before they have driven us away.

One of Jordan's biggest attractions to potential investors is its central location. The single biggest step the government could take to capitalise on that and create an "investor-friendly environment" here is to start transforming their talk of better communications into reality now, by providing a modern, cheap, efficient phone service with a staff committed to serving their customers. If they want to know how to do that, then they can try to find out my phone number and give me a ring.

Tudor Lomas,
West Amman.

JMA pres

doctors fe

in embezz

Auditors have

to prosecutor.

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Medical Association (JMA) President Bassam Dagani announced Saturday that auditors had submitted a report showing that doctors were involved in embezzling from the JMA's saving and pension fund.

The Dagani saw the auditors, appointed by the public prosecutor to examine the books of the association. Following reports last, had submitted their report to the public prosecutor.

He said that the report showed that certain amounts were indeed embezzled but that the doctor had been involved in the case.

He also said that if JMA's lawyer had decided that the matter was best left to the court deal with.

Last August, a government-appointed committee to investigate into the case, blamed inefficient financial management, failure to abide by accounting rules, corruption, and abuse of fund.

Khartou

(Continued from page 1)

Sach said in a press statement published Saturday Khartoum.

Sudan and Egypt had announced the need to ending the conflict. The had occurred in the bilateral relations and the deterioration of those relations to normality," he said.

The picture of what came on following the Ethiopian invasion and what is happening in Sudan was clear to Egyptians and the view points were identical," M

Swedes

for Lon

COPENHAGEN (R) — Dan

... on Saturday, arrested several members of a far-right-wing group that planned to send letters to addresses in London and three bombs intercepted in Sweden contained no explosives.

A Danish policeman was shot and wounded during an attack on the night of the 18th. The police intelligence unit in Germany and the military police of the three devices in Sweden, Copenhagen police said.

King expresse

(Continued from page 1)

The British Crown Prince Prince Charles, in internal document," Prince Hassan said.

He added, "Through the organization which he Prince Charles is heading he managed through the mediation of £20 million to provide 60,000 job opportunities."

Prince Hassan continued that job opportunities provided by 10,000 companies in the U.K. are on the rise day by day.

Noting that the European Union (EU) is currently focusing on the role of non-governmental organizations, he referred to the Amman Chamber of Commerce and the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUC) and their role in developing 11 sites in Amman and four other sites in the neighbouring city of Zarqa.

Prince Hassan noted that development does not mean only urban development. "It is the criterion, I point to some areas such as Mahatta and say that the

Israel expects economic dividends from Hebron accord

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel hopes to draw new foreign investment and tourists, while relaunching trade ties with Arab countries, after the pullback of its troops Friday from the volatile West Bank city of Hebron.

The Tel Aviv stock market is already expecting a resumption of the Middle East peace process, frozen since right-wing leader Benjamin Netanyahu came to power in June.

The Michanin indicator of leading stocks has climbed 13 per cent since the beginning of the year, reaching 239.13 in Thursday trading. The market was closed on Friday.

The volume of transactions, after an empty stretch last year, rose 80 per cent, to \$60 million, in January from December.

Foreign investors, who control 10 per cent of stocks on the Tel Aviv exchange, have stayed on the sidelines for several months because of rising political tensions due to the near collapse of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

The investors, however,

plunged back into the market buying star stocks such as Hapoalim bank, food company Ossem and industrial group Koor, according to traders.

The Israeli government on Thursday also quickly sold \$750 million in bonds on the New York exchange backed by loan guarantees from the U.S. Treasury.

Israeli Central Bank Governor Yaakov Frenkel predicted that the Hebron accord, the first concluded between Israel's new right-wing government and the Palestinian National Authority, would boost foreign investment and bring back tourists, the number of which dropped six per cent last year.

"Businessmen and tourists don't like risks, or uncertainty. For them, the Hebron accord can only have a positive effect," Dr. Frenkel said.

The director of the Israeli Industrial Association, Yoram Blizovsky, also expected that joint projects with Arab countries which were frozen last year "will now move forward."

Qatar, Oman and Morocco,

three Arab countries which had taken the first steps toward normalising ties with Israel, froze their trade relations with the Jewish state after Mr. Netanyahu's election victory.

Israel media had also raised the possibility over the past few weeks of a resumption of the Arab boycott of the Jewish state, which was lifted in 1994 after the launch of Palestinian autonomy.

Such an action would be a rude shock to Israel's economy.

Multinational corporations, believing that Middle East peace was on the way, have invested heavily in Israel since 1995.

International risk-rating agencies such as Standard and Poor's and Moody's had raised their confidence measure of Israel because of the peace process begun with the country's Arab neighbours.

Israeli business leaders also are predicting a flurry of trade with the newly autonomous Palestinian areas following Israel's troop redeployment from

Hebron, the last major town on the West Bank to obtain self-rule.

"The Palestinian autonomous territories represent one of Israel's primary export markets, with sales of \$2 billion in 1996, six times more than Egypt," Mr. Blizovsky said.

The Hebron accord, which was agreed to Wednesday after more than three months of tortuous negotiations and intense U.S. mediation, also calls for improved trade ties between Israel and the Palestinians.

But this will prove difficult unless Israel greatly loosens its repeated closures of the Palestinian territories, which disrupts the flow of people and goods.

The closures, which Israel says are for security reasons, have squeezed the economic life out of the Palestinian territories, causing an explosion in unemployment and a 39 per cent drop in revenue for residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip over the last four years, according to a U.N. report.

UAE official sees no economic gains from Israel

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Israel is looking at the Gulf region as a market for its products but it remains unattractive for Gulf businessmen because it is relatively small, a UAE official said Saturday.

Mohammad Al Abbar, director general of the Dubai Economy Department, said economic dealings with Israel would be possible only after the establishment of a comprehensive peace between the Jewish state and Arabs.

"The Israeli market is not encouraging given its modest potential of (six million). More

than half of them have come from poor countries," Mr. Abbar told the local newspaper Al Khaleej.

"From an economic point of view, the Gulf private sector will not benefit from dealing with the Israeli market. Israel is eyeing the Gulf markets," he pointed out.

The UAE was among several countries that sent delegations to the Middle East economic summit in Cairo late last year. The conference, the third in the region, covered projects to be carried out in the Middle East as part of the peace process

between Israel and Arab countries.

Several Arab officials and experts have warned against joining Israel in a common market on the grounds it is seeking to control their economies.

"There is a psychological barrier between the Arab people and the Israelis which could not be broken easily. I think dealing with Israel will be possible only within a comprehensive peace," Mr. Abbar said.

"This process needs time because humane and peaceful initiatives should take place before commercial dealings."

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY JANUARY 19, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You may feel tied down today, however, this helps you work out some private plan which is not ready to be discussed. See some friends later tonight and make any effort to make them feel comfortable in your home.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) A close friend may be disappointing today, however, later this evening other friends can bring much pleasure in their company, so make the effort to be courteous and handle any difficulties which could be present.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Contact a prominent person today who can extend a favour to you and make your career activities more successful. Use tact and diplomacy for best results and thereby you will gain the respect of a bigwig.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You may feel frustrated today, however, you can go out and gather the information you need to complete any tasks which is given. Later this evening seek out the advice of a knowledgeable person with any career activities.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Organising your ideas today may be difficult, however, don't give up and soon you will get good results from your efforts. Later this evening you can spend some quality time with your loved ones and relax for the days ahead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You may find it difficult today to contact one who is important, however, later this evening you can see this person quite easily. This is a good time for you to go out on the town with close friends for some fun activities.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Wait until the afternoon today before planning your activities for the days ahead and thereby relieve your mind of any difficulties. Take any health treatments later this evening you need to be fit both inside and out.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Handle the duties today around the house which you're responsible for and thereby make your loved ones more appreciative. Make sure you drive carefully while on the highway and stay out of any difficult situations.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Avoid any disagreements at home today, so that you can maintain a harmonious atmosphere. Take time later this evening to enjoy some outside amusement which is worthwhile to your physical and emotional well-being.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Be very serious in your studies today and get excellent results. Get into hobbies later this evening you like and enjoy them, so that you can prepare yourself for the stress and pressures of your business activities.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Come out of that slump today and do something to improve your situation for the better and thereby make your career activities more successful. Make repairs to your property so that you can increase its value.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your wishes today may seem hard to obtain, however, later this evening you can get them. Take no risks concerning your reputation, so that you can gain the recognition of those in authority who can be quite beneficial.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6185	0.6966	0.7036	117.45	1.3404	1670.42	1.8130	5.4880
UK Pound	0.6966	1.1618	1.0000	0.9999	167.45	1.9244	2366.20	2.6361	7.9363
German Mark	0.6185	1.0000	0.7936	0.7937	167.45	2.2244	2636.20	3.0033	9.0088
Swiss Franc	0.7036	0.7937	1.0000	1.0000	167.45	2.5244	2936.20	3.3633	10.0088
Japanese Yen	0.0084	0.0096	0.0060	0.0060	1.0000	0.0090	109.36	1.2361	3.7563
Canadian Dollar	0.7460	1.1982	0.6336	0.6337	117.45	1.0000	125.36	1.3661	4.1563
Italian Lira	0.0008	0.0009	0.0006	0.0006	167.45	0.0008	1.0000	1.3661	4.1563
Dutch Guilder	0.5376	0.8825	0.3756	0.3757	84.75	0.7991	936.56	1.0000	3.0033
French Franc	0.1832	0.2965	0.1058	0.1059	21.50	0.2458	28.36	33.2100	1.0000

Energy		Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	23.25	23.95		
WTI	23.25	23.95		
Bony	23.25	23.95		
Dubai	23.25	23.95		
UL Gas	205.00	206.00		

Mid-East Currencies				
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF
SA Riyal	0.2867	0.4617	0.1598	0.1738
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4384	0.1533	0.1667
KW Dinar	3.3314	5.3937	1.9884	2.1543
QF Dinar	0.3770	0.6038	0.2104	0.2243
CY Pound	2.06	3.3341	1.235	1.3519

Metal Prices			Bid	Offer
Gold (oz)	355.5	356		
Silver (oz)	4.7	4.79		
Platinum (oz)	360.6	361.5		
CU (3 Months)	2240	2245		
Lead (3 Months)	0	0		
Ni (3 Months)	0	0		

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)				
Period	1	3	6	9
USD	5.31	5.43	5.58	5.81
DEM	5.31	5.43	5.58	5.81
GBP	5.31	5.43	5.58	5.81
JPY	5.31	5.43	5.58	5.81
CHF	5.31	5.43	5.58	5.81
ITL	5.31	5.43	5.58	5.81

Main Equity Indices				
Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High
New York DOW JONES	6833.1	57.73	1	6833.79
Nasdaq	2240.7	10.2	0.4	2240.7
London FT-SE 100	4207.7	10.2	0.24	4218.4
Nikkei 225	17800.54	84.3	0.4	17800.54
Paris CAC 40	2425.1	17.33	0.72	2425.13
Frankfurt DAX	3641.37	16.8	0.4	3641.37

Commodity			Last	Delivery
Coffee (lb)	127.58	Spot		
Cocoa (lb)	1260	Spot		
Sugar (lb)	305.5	Spot		
Wheat (lb)	136	Spot		
Soy (lb)	22.74	Spot		
Tea (lb)	115	Spot		
Barley (lb)	222	Spot		
Rice (lb)	470	Spot		

JOD Cross Rates			Buy	Sell
Currency				
US Dollar	0.708	0.710		
GB Sterling	0.175	0.176		
DE Mark	0.4368	0.438		
CH Franc	0.5926	0.594		
FR Franc	0.1297	0.1303		
JP Yen	0.0027	0.0028		
NL Guilder	0.3589	0.3598		
IT Lira	0.4507	0.452		

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

EU warned it has no alternative to farm reform

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union (EU) may have to slash its beef, dairy and cereal production and jeopardise other vital trade interests if it does not act to bring its agricultural prices into line with world levels, its senior trade official has warned.

"Prices must come down," Sir Leon Brittan said in a speech to the Irish Cooperative Organisation Society in Dublin. "Our agriculture industry must be able to operate on world markets without subsidy; we must be able to compete effectively against imports from elsewhere."

Sir Brittan's intervention came amid increasing debate about the future of the common agricultural policy (CAP).

The policy, which guarantees farmers prices that are frequently well above world market levels (around 15 per cent for

wheat for example), accounts for nearly half the EU's 80 billion European Currency Units (\$100 billion) budget.

"Farming remains essential for rural development but it is illusory to think that policy can be based exclusively on agriculture," Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler has said Monday.

He emphasised that in many rural parts of the EU farming now accounts for less than half the jobs.

"We have to change our thought patterns here," he said.

If it maintains its current level of cereal production, the EU will be producing a surplus of 40 million tonnes by the end of the century — well in excess of the 25-million tonne ceiling on subsidised exports it is committed to implementing by 1999 under the Uruguay Round world trade accord, Sir Brittan said.

A similar crunch is looming in the dairy and beef sectors.

Attempting to maintain high prices through market intervention would quickly lead to an unsustainable buildup of stocks, he warned.

That left no alternative: "If we remain reliant on export subsidies in order to access the world market, respecting our WTO (World Trade Organisation) commitments will mean tight controls on production."

Sir Brittan also warned that a failure to press ahead with agricultural reform could undermine the EU's position when a new round of negotiations on further liberalisation of world trade gets under way.

The EU is committed to beginning new negotiations on agriculture by 1999 and its major partners are already taking significant steps away

from direct subsidies to farmers.

The U.S. farm act had radically altered the nature of farm support by making income support independent of production choices, leaving the farmer free to plant the crops consumers want. Support levels are virtually non-existent in New Zealand, low in Australia and declining in Canada.

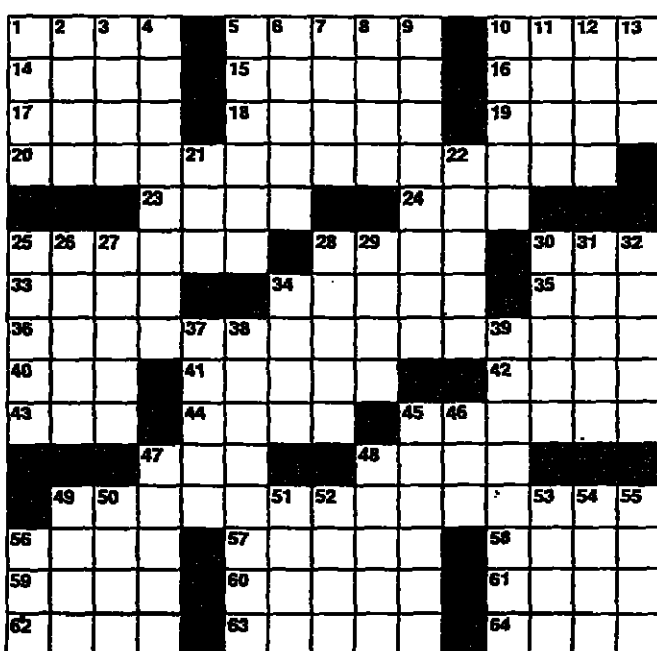
"We have to be realistic about this. The pressure is not going to vanish," Sir Brittan said.

The EU could opt to dig in its heels on agriculture but that would inevitably compromise its ability to win trade concessions in other fields where it has equal or greater interests.

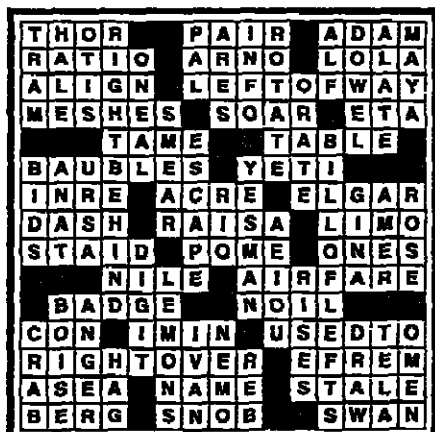
It would also leave EU farmers increasingly unable to compete in a growing world market. "No sector of the economy can thrive if it is kept cocooned and isolated," Sir Brittan said.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS**
- Sharp breath
 - Football great
 - Church area
 - King of the Huns
 - Without help
 - Stable baby
 - Synthesizer
 - Lariat
 - Possessive
 - Cause of Trojan war, in myth
 - Wheel holder
 - Chapeau
 - Cheered (for)
 - Hwys.
 - Blue
 - spumante
 - Blame
 - Numerical prefix
 - Legendary pioneer
 - English festival
 - Yellow fever mosquito
 - African port
 - Pronoun
 - Um
 - Stop
 - Patriotic gp.
 - Mid expletive
 - Special favorite
 - French cheese
 - Mythological weeper
 - Heed
 - Karenina
 - Where heroes are made
 - Prod
 - Emt an odor
 - Benefits
 - Clothing



by Al Becker

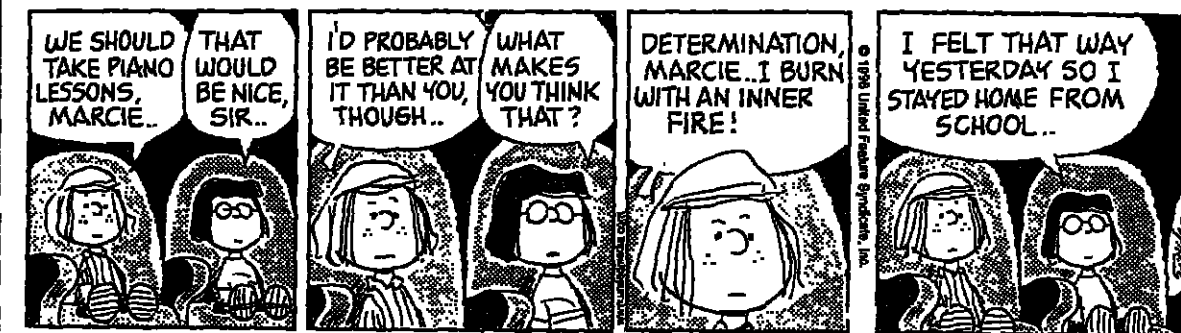


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- DOWN**
- Vasco da —
 - Above
 - Pig cuisine
 - Itsay owday, e.g.
 - Ancient king of England
 - Get —
 - Burden
 - Against
 - Beach find
 - Going on
 - Ring stone
 - Some trains
 - English river
 - Social class
 - 25 Eastern prince
 - "Mio"
 - Different
 - Money for 25D
 - Insider info
 - Metric measure
 - Regions
 - "If — Care" (Inkspots' song)
 - Roams
 - Relating to ships
 - Decembers' final days
 - Classifies
 - "Gunsmoke" star
 - Actress
 - Charlotte
 - Give a talk
 - "Gillies" (old TV show)
 - English
 - Spanish river
 - Satecracker
 - Vowel run, in reverse
 - People

JORDAN TIMES
TEL:
684311-699634

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Busi
Jorda
incre

AMMAN (Petra) — Arab Company for facturing White (last year produced 1 tonnes of cement, reing an increase of tonnes over the 195 duction figure. The announcement made Saturday by Chairman Eid Abu who said that only 5 tonnes were marke Jordan and the re exported to Syria Saudi Arabia. Mr. Abu Karaki sa company was pu efforts to export

Daily
A review of n

Haj Hass
1996 was

1996 WAS a d ing year for us as e was any trader wh loss during that y member of the b Commerce. He als year economically Gulf War and the Mr. Haj Hassan exerted by the gov the private sector, mons, the situat alone is not enoug whole region," he correlation between According to M the Consumer Pr economy did not the contrary, there sectors due to wea secondary strategi Obeidat indicated, unlikely to develop continue to be wit ty.

Dr. Obeidat calle forum with the e ic specialists and scientific strategy my. He indicated improve the King sectors that requir addition to specif various areas.

The head of the people have not f nomic performance trative facilities a factors to attract the Kingdom. He were good but stil He concluded opportunities still necessary to desig to market Jordan available investme

THE BETTER



"I'm intera

JUMBI
Understand these four J and offer to each square four ordinary words

DIPE
RIPEV
PHORGE
NIMPED
Print answer here :

Yesterday's Jumbies Answer

Gulf Air to sell six aircraft in bid to avoid bankruptcy

He said the company has plans for modernisation and development of its equipment and production lines noting that the company's production stopped for two months

The company, added Mr. Abu Karaki, has created a provident fund for the workers, with their savings earning a 28 per cent interest each year.

Gulf Air will now try to consolidate strategic routes, he said.

"Flights to London Heathrow are to be operated by the Airbus A440 aircraft to provide this strategic sector with additional seating capacity."

The losses were caused mainly by growing competition from other airlines including those launched recently by Oman and Qatar.

According to Gulf Air chief executive Ahmad Ben Saif Al Nahayan of Abu Dhabi, Gulf Air has managed to eliminate around 60 per cent of the company's budget deficit of \$150 million in 1996.

He concluded by noting that there are many opportunities still not utilised in Jordan and that it is necessary to design an adequate marketing strategy to market Jordan touristically and also market the available investment opportunities (Al Dustour).

During a visit by Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma to Muscat, Omani officials announced they had decided to shelve the pipeline project, which could have cost up to \$10 billion.

They said Oman had spent nearly \$70 million on its feasibility studies but was not found viable because it does not have enough gas.

Oman's gas reserves are officially put at around 750 billion cubic metres (25 trillion cubic feet) and a large part of the


"The cost of buying LNG and transporting it

LNG and transporting it by tankers from the Gulf could be more than that of natural gas. But it is economically more viable in India and more secure than the pipelines," Mr. Jain said.

He said India had considered purchasing natural gas from Iran through a pipeline that could travel through Afghanistan and Pakistan. But it later dropped the idea because Pakistan refused to give passage.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDANIA TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179 ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 18/01/1997										
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH LOW		COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOS. PRICE	CHANGE
261.00	205.00	ARAB BANK	14.2	1.35	1	20	5180	259.00	259.00	-
1.310	.880	MED. EAST INV. BK.	75.5	0.00	2	38450	4367.2	1.12	1.15	-.03+
2.700	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.2	6.11	2	212	482	2.28	2.3	-
5.250	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.4	2.98	9	2181	10098	4.66	4.43	-.03+
2.950	2.440	JOR. KIWAT BANK	19.1	0.00	4	259	878	2.62	2.73	-.01+
1.090	.880	JOR. GULF BANK	7.7	7.29	4	4700	4512	.95	.96	-.01+
3.900	3.450	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	18.9	0.00	1	200	704	3.68	3.52	-.16+
4.180	3.480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	18.0	0.00	1	200	748	3.74	3.74	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 196.50	%CHG: -0.01		48	46222	66075			
1.830	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.4	7.32	4	1086	1780	1.64	1.64	-
9.250	7.800	JOR. HOTEL TOURISM	17.7	1.99	2	30000	247500	8.00	8.25	-.25+
5.650	4.200	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	14.2	2.92	2	116	510	4.50	4.40	-.10+
2.800	2.090	SUPPLY TRD.	10.8	0.00	8	1000	8100	1.45	1.50	-.05+
1.720	1.080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	6	1380	1682	1.25	1.24	-.01+
1.050	.820	REAL ESTATE INV.	20.0	4.14	4	1650	1481	.87	.90	-.03+
1.060	.580	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	31.8	0.00	3	1480	897	.62	.72	-
2.200	1.490	MID. EAST HOTELS	65.5	0.00	3	1812	11317	1.55	1.42	-.13+
3.720	3.130	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	14.0	5.63	7	8600	6782	3.66	3.55	-.09+
1.220	.980	EMARA EDUCATION	9	0.00	3	600	633	1.05	1.06	-.01+
2.250	1.690	UNITED CO.	11.4	4.63	11	12750	27658	2.15	2.16	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 111.73	%CHG: +0.26		48	60014	303289			
3.730	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.3	2.97	13	16775	56462	3.35	3.47	-.02+
10.400	9.720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.9	8.15	2	820	8196	9.84	9.81	-.03+
3.650	1.650	INDUSTRIAL COMM. MGR.	36.0	0.00	12	3200	8538	2.58	2.68	-.10+
4.730	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MFG.	20.2	5.48	8	1450	5336	3.68	3.67	-.01+
2.330	1.700	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	9.0	7.41	3	275	405	1.61	1.62	-.01+
7.350	4.250	DAR ALDAMA DY. INV.	13.4	4.08	3	250	1380	4.85	4.40	-.05+
5.900	3.130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	8.1	8.31	9	830	348	3.48	3.38	-.12+
.960	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	8	17000	10710	.63	.63	-
1.440	1.050	ARAB TAPPER CONV. TRD.	7.9	8.85	5	900	1051	1.17	1.17	-
.540	.420	NATIONAL TRD.	10.2	0.00	7	9320	7427	1.09	1.09	-.01+
1.580	.930	AL. INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	1	500	545	1.09	1.09	-
1.070	1.080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	27.9	0.00	55	22000	32980	1.48	1.49	-.01+
3.150	1.440	UNIV. HOUS. INDS.	5.2	11.63	4	880	1462	1.72	1.72	-
1.830	1.490	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	6.3	0.00	63	45408	61449	1.33	1.35	-
1.390	.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	25.5	0.00	6	5200	4856	.94	.94	-.02+
2.460	1.750	KEL. -RAY READY WEAR	9	0.00	2	570	1084	1.88	1.85	-.03+
1.380	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	29.4	0.00	18	40100	50107	1.24	1.23	-.01+
1.550	.930	UNION CHE. & VEG.	24.1	0.00	2	350	346	.97	.98	-.01+
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 114.80	%CHG: +0.23		213	165139	251811			
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 153.36	%CHG: +0.10		309	271375	621174			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 18/01/1997										
-	.800	JOR. TRADE FAC.	14.1	0.00	10	6300	3319	.52	.53	-.01+
.890	.700	UNION INV. 50%	68.9	0.00	5	11500	2830	.72	.72	-
.970	.960	ARAB FINE INVEST.	9	0.00	4	2580	1173	.46	.46	-
.640	.310	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	25.00	0.00	25	42900	13468	.32	.31	-.02-
1.730	1.300	NATL. CHARITIES	9	0.00	2	2250	3130	1.40	1.40	-
.690	.450	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	16	23750	11545	.50	.48	-.02-
.520	.900	NAT. SEC. RES.	22	0.00	22	200	7765	.35	.34	-.01-
.940	.400	NATL. MULL. SEC. NAMICO	9	0.00	26	14653	9438	.51	.51	-
.990	.720	JORDAN STEEL	9	0.00	9	5700	4332	.76	.76	-
.570	.700	NAT. PHARM. 65%	27	0.00	40	3000	780	.61	.61	-
.770	.390	INDS. ENG.	26.5	0.00	40	89400	28438	.42	.43	-.01+
.820	.590	NATL. POULTRY	9	0.00	6	13300	9165	.67	.70	-.03+
N 1.020	.800	ARAB INTL. FOOD FACT.	69.5	0.00	9	29900	25635	.99	.99	-
.150	.530	MED. INST. COMPLEX	7.6	0.00	49	83350	54568	.66	.65	-.01-
GRAND TOTAL					226	342698	185326			

N = Listed during the past 12 months
P = P/E ratio is 100 or more
G = Negative P/E
+ = Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year



JUMBLE.

Unscramble the four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DIPTE


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RIPEV

PHORGE

NIMPED

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Arginton



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here : HIS " " " "


(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's

Jumbles: THINK PIECE CIPHER ACTING
Answer: How the ice house staff got their work done - BY CHIPPING IN

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Arab envoys brief Albright on peace process

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab ambassadors at the United Nations have urged the future U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to help revive stalled Israeli-Syrian peace talks, an Egyptian government daily reported Saturday.

They made the request during a meeting Friday at the Egyptian mission in New York at the behest of Ms. Albright, the outgoing U.N. ambassador, to familiarise herself with the needs and concerns of the Arab diplomats. Al-Ahram daily said.

"I wanted to talk to you to get acquainted with your positions, your concerns and what you expect from the United States in the next phase," Ms. Albright told the Arab diplomats, according to Al-Ahram.

The Arab diplomats underscored the need to "make progress" in Israeli peace talks with Syria and Lebanon, which have been stalled for nearly one year. Al-Ahram said.

They also called on the United States to follow up on the implementation of the Hebron accord under which Israel pledged to hand over control over the West Bank town to the Palestinians, it added.

The talks also centred on the thorny issue of Jewish settlements and efforts to rid the region of nuclear weapons amid Israel's failure to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Arab Gulf ambassadors voiced concern over Iran's armament policy, "particularly following Iran's latest purchase of (Russian) submarines," Al-Ahram said.

The meeting coincided with discussions in Cairo on Friday between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam on the Middle East peace process following the implementation of the Hebron accord.

Iran sets by-elections in February for 22 seats

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran to hold parliamentary by-elections on Feb. 7 to fill 22 vacant seats in the assembly, the Interior Ministry said.

Voting will be held in 15 districts where results were cancelled for alleged irregularities after the legislative polls in March and April.

Islamic conservatives won most of the seats in the 270-member parliament, against a coalition of Islamic left-wingers and moderates close to President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The conservatives, led by parliamentary speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri, hope to tighten their grip on the assembly by winning new seats next month.

The speaker is favoured by the ruling Shiite Muslim clergy to replace Mr. Rafsanjani after the June or July presidential election.



BLAST IN LAHORE: Security forces and rescue workers remove a man wounded in an explosion outside a courthouse in the Pakistani city of Lahore on Saturday. The blast killed at least 15 people, including the leader of a militant group, and wounded 90 (see story inside) (AFP photo)

Peru rebels free hostage, but both sides maintain tough line

LIMA (AFP) — Leftist rebels freed one of their 74 hostages, but both sides stuck to a hard line Saturday with rebels insisting their 440 jailed comrades be freed and the government again rejecting the demand.

The government also took a hard line with the media, attempting to remove news photographers and television crews late Friday from a roof overlooking the Japanese embassy residence but without immediate success.

From their vantage point, they are able to read posters in the window of the Japanese embassy compound seized on Dec. 17.

"Most Peruvians would like to eat as well as the prisoners in here. These differences justify the people's struggle," one Saturday, referring to regular food deliveries to the Japanese embassy compound by the International Red Cross.

A third said only that the 73 remaining hostages were held because they were decision-makers in the government.

Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) rebels released Luis Valencia, the chief of operations for Peru's anti-terrorism police, who appeared to need assistance Friday as he walked out of the Japanese ambassador's residence to applause from other hostages.

Mr. Valencia is best known for his prominent role in the September 1992 arrest of Abimael Guzman, the founder of Peru's larger rebel force, the Maoist Shining Path.

representative Michel Minnig said later that the Red Cross had requested his release for health reasons. Mr. Valencia, 46, suffers from diabetes, heart problems and ulcers.

In a press conference shortly after the release, Domingo Palermo, the government's point man on the month-old crisis, once again rejected the top MRTA demand: freeing its prisoners.

"As is public knowledge, the Peruvian state will not free MRTA prisoners. I repeat, as is public knowledge, the Peruvian state will not free MRTA prisoners," Mr. Palermo said.

Tupac Amaru rebels responded early Saturday with posters in the window reiterating their demand for release of some 440 comrades in Peru's prisons.

"Mothers, wives and children of our prisoners are also awaiting their freedom. Peace for all," read one early Saturday.

In Tokyo, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Saturday that Japan fully supports the Peruvian government's proposals to solve the month-long hostage crisis.

"Japan hopes for a serious reply from the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, so as to make progress towards the settlement," said spokesman Hiroshi Hashimoto.

Mr. Palermo said that Canada had been asked to join the commission but gave no indication whether Tupac Amaru rebels had agreed to the participation of Canadian Ambassador

Anthony Vincent, who was himself a hostage.

The government called for the talks to take place in a vehicle in a security zone near the embassy residence.

Still held captive are the Japanese ambassador, Japanese executives, the Bolivian ambassador, President Alberto Fujimori's younger brother and two Peruvian cabinet ministers.

Tupac Amaru rebels, who seized the residence on Dec. 17 with more than 600 prominent officials inside during a gala reception, let go women and most elderly captives, and last released hostages on Jan. 1, when a group of seven were let out.

Peruvian officials and rebels have battled over the makeup of a negotiating panel to end the crisis. The two sides have agreed on representatives from the Holy See and the Red Cross.

The Peruvian government turned down a rebel call for Guatemala to be on the panel. Guatemala's government just signed a peace deal with its leftist rebels, and Peru says there are no parallels can be drawn.

Before the release Friday, 15 people with signs and megaphones showed up with a mariachi band to sing "happy birthday" to Jorge San Roman, the deputy minister of energy who turned 57 Friday.

Red Cross spokesman Steven Anderson, who enters the compound daily, indicated that there would be no quick end to the crisis.

"To wake up every day with the idea that they will be freed that day makes it harder for them."

Jordanian said held in Lebanon

BEIRUT (R) — The manager of Beirut's Marriott Hotel said on Saturday a Jordanian employee reported arrested by Lebanese security forces for alleged links to anti-Syrian attacks disappeared 15 days ago and has not been seen since.

General Manager Sam Ibrahim said financial controller Darrar Al Karmi, a Jordanian, left the hotel in west Beirut "with unknown persons" on Jan. 3 and has not come back since.

"All I know is he left the hotel on Jan. 3 at about 5.15 p.m. with unknown persons. We don't know where he is now," Mr. Ibrahim told Reuters.

He said Mr. Karmi was in his 40s but did not elaborate. Beirut newspaper reports on Saturday that Mr. Karmi was arrested by Lebanese security forces on Jan. 3 on suspicion of links to recent attacks on Syrian targets.

Al-Diyar daily, quoting official sources, said Mr. Karmi was arrested on suspicion of links to a machinegun attack on Dec. 18 on a van carrying Syrian workers in the Christian area of Tabarja north of Beirut in which the driver was killed.

Al-Nahar daily, quoting a recent report by the Kuwaiti daily Al-Anba, said Mr. Karmi was arrested but it was not clear if he was being questioned over the Tabarja incident or the Dec. 31 bus-bombing in Damascus that killed 11 people.

Syria has accused Israel of being behind the Damascus blast, an allegation denied by Israel.

Asked about Mr. Karmi's arrest, Prosecutor-General Adnan Adoum said: "I can't confirm or deny this because I am not aware of it personally and did not give orders to arrest anyone."

Some 48 Lebanese people were arrested after the Tabarja attack but were freed later. Damascus is Beirut's main foreign power broker with 35,000 troops stationed over two thirds of Lebanon.

Egypt still pursuing case of PoWs deaths

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Anwar Musa on Saturday said Cairo still wants answers on the massacre of Egyptian prisoners of war (PoWs) by the Israeli army during conflicts in 1956 and 1967.

"Up until now the Israeli report on the inquiry into these crimes has not been received by Cairo, which is continuing to follow the case with interest," Mr. Musa told reporters.

"The negotiations on Hebron or any other question will not make U.S. forget other issues that we judge important," he added, referring to Israel's withdrawal from the West Bank town of Hebron which has dominated the Middle East political scene in recent weeks.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced in December 1995 the appointment of a general to investigate the massacre of hundreds of Egyptian prisoners of war by the Israeli army during the conflicts of 1956 and 1967.

Helms urges halt in aid to S. Africa over Syria

WASHINGTON (AP) — The head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has urged the U.S. Government to suspend aid to South Africa if it goes ahead with plans to sell weapons components to Syria.

"The government of South Africa should understand that, not only will U.S.-South African relations suffer if they arm a terrorist nation, but also a significant amount of U.S. foreign aid to South Africa will be cut off," said a statement released by Senator Jesse Helms.

On Wednesday, South African President Nelson Mandela rejected any pressure against the \$650 million deal, which involves the supply of modern firing control systems for Syria's ageing Soviet-made tank force.

Syria is on a U.S. list of countries that sponsor terrorism, along with several

other foes of Israel in the Middle East. American law requires the administration to withhold assistance to countries that provide military equipment to countries on the list.

Israel also has protested the deal. It said the South African fire control system was based on technology obtained from Israel before 1994 by South Africa's white government.

"Syrian acquisition of the state-of-the-art military hardware runs counter to long-standing U.S. national security interests in the region and represents a significant new threat to Israel," said the statement by the committee chairman.

Sen. Helms, a staunch supporter of Israel, recommended that the administration make it clear to the South African government "in no uncertain terms" that foreign aid will be suspended if the sale goes through.

Libya assails U.S. criticism of its stand on balloon trip

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libya on Saturday stepped up the war of words with the United States in the diplomatic squabble over U.S. adventurer Steve Fossitt's foray into Libyan airspace during his bid to make the first round-the-world balloon flight.

A Foreign Ministry official quoted by the official Libyan news agency JANA said U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns was "delirious and rambling like a drug addict" after he accused Tripoli of paranoia for initially refusing Mr. Fossitt permission to fly over the country.

Libya's government said Friday it would not allow the silver balloon to overfly its territory but later gave its permission for the flight.

The 52-year-old stockbroker, in his helium "Solo Spirit" balloon, crossed over the southern tip of Libya "uneventfully" Saturday, spokesman Alan Blount told AFP from mission control in Chicago.

Mission watchers said the original refusal had forced Mr. Fossitt into a detour which had added about a day and a half to the trip.

"It's really a shame that the Libyan government couldn't see its way to give balloons the right to travel across their airspace," Mr. Burns said during a press briefing, adding that Tripoli's decision reflected "the paranoia of the Libyan leadership."

In a message to the United Nations, the Libyan Foreign Ministry said: "It is incomprehensible that Mr. Burns reproaches Libya when the whole world knows perfectly well that the United States is behind the air embargo imposed on our country" since 1992.

"It is really regrettable that the spokesman of a major power like the United States uses pejorative and trivial terms such as paranoia," the Libyan official said, adding that Washington was showing a lack of respect for the sovereignty of other states.

India intercepts Pakistani boat loaded with weapons

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India on Saturday intercepted a Pakistani boat loaded with weapons off the western state of Gujarat, where it had shot down a Pakistani spy-plane earlier this week, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

A.K. Tandon, director-general of the Border Security Force said the vessel had been intercepted in Indian waters off the district of Kutch.

He said weapons seized from the boat included 19 Chinese-made pistols, five AK-47 assault rifles, a revolver, 1,320 explosives and a huge stock of cartridges.

He did not give further details. It was not immediately clear if any arrests were made.

Meanwhile, Indian defence authorities were examining a video clip of a Pakistani pilotless plane downed by a missile fired by the Indian Air Force over an airport in the Gujarat town of Bhuj on Wednesday.

Defence sources said air force experts had not been able to ascertain the make of the craft nor the country where it was produced.

"The Unmanned Air Vehicle" (UAV) is not made in Pakistan," a source told the United News of India (UNI) Saturday.

"Experts are trying to crack the riddle as to which country supplied the plane to Pakistan and results will be forthcoming," he said.

India issued a formal protest against Pakistan on Thursday over the intrusion of its airspace by the remote-controlled plane, describing it as an "unfriendly act."

The Indian Air Force, the world's fourth largest, has placed radar and missile stations along the forward zone in Gujarat on high alert since the shooting incident.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since the subcontinent's independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

The two South-Asian rivals often clash at frontier zones in Kashmir but have not attacked each other's aircraft since the alleged shooting of an Indian helicopter last year across the Siachen Glacier in the Himalayas.

Islamists challenge Kuwaiti novelists

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — A group of Islamists is trying to have three books written by Kuwaiti novelists banned because they contain passages about sex that are corrupting society, the group's leading member said Saturday.

Abdul Latif Al Ateeqi and three other Islamists are seeking a ban from the courts on books by local novelists Laila Al Othman and Alia Al Shuaib which include homosexual and other sex scenes, Mr. Ateeqi told AFP.

Mr. Ateeqi, who is a government employee and writer for the daily Al-Qabas, said his aim is to "protect public morals" by challenging the books, arguing that they are against the Islamic traditions of this emirate.

"We (do) not accept this homosexual story because we are Muslim," said Mr. Ateeqi, referring to one of the works by Mr.

Othman.

"We do not accept that this is literature? How is this literature?"

Mr. Othman and Mr. Shuaib were questioned by the public prosecutor at the end of December after the Islamists presented a case against two books by Mr. Othman published in the 1980s and one book by Mr. Shuaib published in 1993.

Mr. Ateeqi said he had been prompted to present his case now after reading the passages about sex in a criticism of all three books penned recently by another Islamist writer, and then reading the stories themselves.

The Kuwaiti Writers' Association has criticised the action by the Islamists, calling it "intellectual terrorism" and has also called on the government to prevent such cases which challenge writers' freedom from reaching the courts.

McEnroe buys Madonna duplex

NEW YORK (AFP) — Pop star and actress Madonna has found a buyer for her 14-room central park duplex: tennis star John McEnroe.

McEnroe's favourite Brat reportedly bought Madonna's pad for \$7 million to house the three children he had with actress Tatum O'Neal and the child of current girlfriend country singer Patty Smythe. But neighbours apparently are not too happy about the move, fearing the tantrums that made McEnroe famous and rehearsals of his budding rock band may disturb their sleep.

De Niro in court

NEW YORK (AFP) — Actor Robert De Niro and his ex-wife Toukie Smith are battling in court over their twin boys, conceived in vitro and carried by a surrogate mother after the couple broke up. Smith claims De Niro is not paying his share of child support, according to press reports, while the actor wants the court to detail his visitation rights. De Niro can often be seen pushing the 15-month-old boys in a baby stroller in New York's Tribeca neighbourhood.

Ecstasy comments lands musician in trouble

LONDON (AFP) — The British music group East 17 has decided to drop Brian Harvey after he praised the drug Ecstasy as something which could make people "better", their recording company announced Friday. "His recent remarks about drugs to the media have forced the other three members to demand that Brian leaves the band," a statement from Massive Management said. "The remaining three members of East 17 under no circumstances can condone the taking of Ecstasy or any other illegal substances. They want it known that these remarks made by Brian Harvey do not reflect the views of the three other members." Harvey provoked a furore Thursday when he said in a radio interview that he had once taken 12 Ecstasy tablets before driving his car and did not regard the drug as harmful.

Supermodel sentenced in drug charge

DAKAR (AFP) — Former Senegalese supermodel Katoucha Niane got a six-month suspended prison sentence on Friday after a Dakar court convicted her of "possession of drugs paraphernalia," a judicial source said. Niane, who has been launching her own designer collection, was arrested on Dec. 20, 1994 along with 15 other people at the home of a Senegalese drug trafficker in a low-income district of Dakar. She was conditionally freed on Jan. 6, 1995 pending Friday's sentencing, in which the trafficker — described by police as the mastermind of a Senegalese narcotics ring — was given three years behind bars. Niane, the daughter of Senegalese writer Djibril Tamsir Niane and a close friend of British model Naomi Campbell, is regarded as having helped change the fashion world's perception of black models. She was a favourite of Yves Saint Laurent and Christian Lacroix.

Sinatra out of hospital

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Eighty-one-year-old Frank Sinatra was discharged Friday from Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre in Los Angeles, a spokeswoman for the singer said. "His doctors discharged him from Cedars this morning and his prognosis continues to be good," said his publicist Susan Reynolds. "As would be expected, he's delighted to be home."

Paramedics took him to the hospital Jan. 9 after he suffered a heart attack at his home in Beverly Hills. Rex Kennamer, Sinatra's personal physician, said Sinatra had "an uncomplicated heart attack."

Palestinian guard killed in Lebanon camp

AMMAN (AP) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday called for increasing funds and investment where they are needed most. Speaking during an annual banquet for representatives of various organizations, Prince Hassan said that should incorporate the needs and aspirations of the people. He called for more social fact funding in order to accurately pinpoint their needs. Prince Hassan said making people aware of the importance of conserving energy and water consumption is a field which should be undertaken in co-ordinating centres to be established in the Kingdom.

Palestinian guard killed in Lebanon camp

AMMAN (AP) — The bodyguard of a leading member of a Palestinian group hostile to Yasser Arafat, a peace deal with Israel, has been wounded in the southern Lebanon refugee camp. Palestinian security sources said Sunday.

Minut Ahmad, 40, was shot dead by a masked man Saturday night in one of the narrow lanes in "Am al-Helwan, on the outskirts of the southern port of Sidon, the sources said.

Youssef was the bodyguard of Khalid Al Shaye, a member of a Lachy faction which opposed Mr. Arafat's policies.

Russia, Egypt con-

CAIRO (AFP) — Russia over the future of the process, a special envoy Boris Yeltsin said here speaking after a meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, said R the efforts and positive to the peace process and this process. "The Russian message to Mr. Mubarak is that the peace process is the heart of the bilateral co-operation."

Volume 22 Num

Arafat Palesti

Palestinian

ILKRON (Agencies) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, greeted by a crowd of Palestinian supporters, celebrated the takeover of Hebron after three decades of Israeli occupation, had a last-minute change of heart, waving the Israeli flag from the balcony of the Jewish settlers who remain in the heart of the West Bank town.

"I say to the settlers here in Hebron that we don't want confrontation... we want a just peace," Mr. Arafat told the cheering crowd from the balcony of the former Israeli military headquarters, now the Palestinian police station.

The crowd waved Palestinian flags and chanted "With our blood and sweat we will build a new state."

Mr. Arafat leaned forward over the crowd, waving a white flag with both hands.

Mr. Arafat's government took control of 80 per cent of Hebron on Friday after months of difficult negotiations with the hardline government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, long a critic of the peace process begun by his Jewish predecessors.

Now with this Hebron

(continued on page 7)

Settlers could be

BEIRUT (AFP) — A night-long coalition government of Jewish settlers living in the West Bank could become Palestinian territory, a final peace accord.

It could well be that the settlement of the West Bank is a topic which should be discussed in the final peace accord.

Mr. Levy speaking at a school near Tel Aviv, said that the final status of the West Bank is a final status for the

Crown Prince

calls for sound

utilisation of funds.

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